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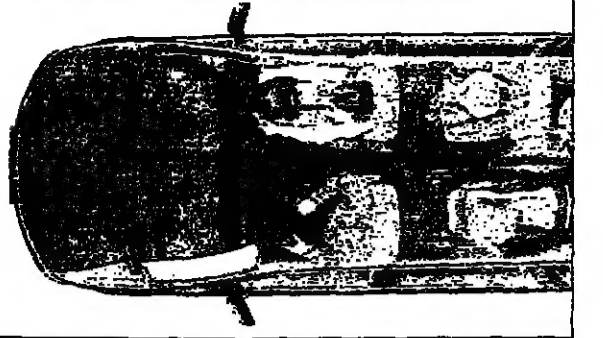


INSIDE

■ Part one: Portrait of a very royal marriage
■ A dominant, difficult man and the woman with whom he found love, loyalty and independence

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Details and today's token in CAR 96, page 10



Ministers shoot down Europe's game bird ruling

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

MINISTERS are set to defy a new European Union regulation that would wreck havoc on one of Britain's oldest country pursuits — the shooting of game birds such as pheasant and partridge.

Landowners and gamekeepers on estates across the country will breathe a sigh of relief after the Government indicated this week that it will not enforce a Brussels ban on a drug that prevents wasting diseases in game birds. The unprecedented move marks

the first time that the Government has publicly admitted that it is willing to ignore a European law. Until now, Britain has held an exemplary record in enforcing EU law more strictly than many of its European allies, and the admission apparently signals a landmark change in the Government's attitude to Brussels legislation.

The move will also be welcomed by many Eurosceptic MPs who have consistently demanded less stringent implementation of unpopular regulations. In the past, Tory ministers regularly spent their weekends

with dog and shotgun in hand, bagging pheasants and partridges. Fewer do today — Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, and William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, are three exceptions — and the shooting fraternity can no longer bank on automatic Government support for their industry.

The banned drug, called Emtryl, has been used by most British game breeders for the past 20 years. However, the Government failed to block a European Commission proposal last summer that

banned Emtryl after some studies indicated it could cause cancer. Game breeders say that the ban would be catastrophic for the game shooting business which is worth about £294 million each year and supports 13,000 jobs. In a written Commons answer last October, the Government admitted that the ban could wipe out about ten million birds.

Thatcher blast fails to unnerve Major

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN MAJOR responded yesterday to Baroness Thatcher's broadside against his Government by telling her that he would not be budged from the course on which he had embarked.

Rejecting her calls for a more right-wing agenda and her assault on One Nation Toryism, he said: "I will not be pushed off what I believe to be right."

As the Government made a determined effort to play down the impact of the former Prime Minister's attack on its record, Mr Major followed his own advice of last weekend and avoided engaging in a public argument with her.

Even so, in a brief response during a visit to his Huntingdon constituency, the Prime Minister calmly rejected the main planks of Lady Thatcher's onslaught: her derisive dismissal of the One Nation Conservative tradition and her claim that Mr Major's Government had let down the middle classes.

"We have been a One Nation Conservative Party since the beginning of time and we are now," he said. "I have set out what I believe to be right and I shall fight for what I believe to be right."

Mr Major and some other ministers maintained publicly that Lady Thatcher's wide-ranging critique was aimed at Labour and not at the Government. He suggested that she must have been baffled by some of the things she read in the newspapers yesterday.

However, given the fact that only a small part of the speech was about Labour, that the Tory Left denounced it and the Right applauded it, it was not

an argument that, privately, ministers or their spin doctors were trying to maintain.

Instead, Mr Major, Dr Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, and their colleagues decided that the less said about her speech at the Centre for Policy Studies the better. Mr Major was careful not to inflame the situation and made no direct criticism of his predecessor.

Lady Thatcher, he said, was a very important part of the Conservative Party. "The Conservative Party, as I have been saying for a long time, is a broad church. Every part of that Conservative Party has an input into that policy. When we have that input into our policy, we set out what it is and we live and we win in the Centre Right of politics."

Dismissing her claims that the Tories were failing the middle classes, he added: "What you need to deliver prosperity is a secure economy that is going to last, and we have delivered one out of a very difficult recession. Here and abroad we have now delivered a platform of prosperity that we have not seen equalled in this country for two decades and I am going to build on that platform of prosperity and I do not intend to be pushed off it."

Mr Major was irritated but unsurprised by the intervention from Lady Thatcher. Ministers felt that her remarks about One Nation Toryism were a misjudgment, but the most damaging were those about the disappointment of the middle classes and

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Miss Cousins, flanked by her parents, appeals yesterday to teenagers not to "dance with death" with Ecstasy

Ecstasy girl says: Never again

By RICHARD DUCE

HELEN COUSINS, the teenager who won a fight for life after taking an Ecstasy tablet, made a public appeal yesterday for other young people to avoid a similar "dance with death".

Miss Cousins, 19, appeared with her parents Janet and Trevor at a press conference at Edith Cavell Hospital in Peterborough to underline the message that drug-taking was not worth the risk.

Mrs Cousins, 51, said: "Helen would like to say that it is when problems like this hit home that you realise Ecstasy is not worth the dance with death." Miss Cousins was asked if she would consider taking Ecstasy once more she whispered: "Never again."

She cannot speak above a whisper after a tracheostomy to help her to breathe during two days in intensive care. She slipped into a coma after taking Ecstasy at a nightclub on New Year's Eve.

The tube was removed yesterday and Miss Cousins, a sales assistant, is expected to be allowed home over the weekend.

Bypass police arrest 34

The Battle of Newbury began in earnest when the police arrested 34 bypass protesters and contractors felled more than 300 trees.

After a three-day stand-off, police responded to pressure from local politicians and used the new Criminal Justice Act to make arrests for aggravated trespass. Page 7

War crimes claim

The United Nations war crimes tribunal, which has representatives in Bosnia, is to investigate allegations that up to 8,000 bodies may be buried in mineshafts in north-west Bosnia guarded by Serb soldiers. Page 10

Royal stalker freed by magistrate

By KATE ALDERSON

THE obsessive stalker of the Princess Royal who admitted to police that he had sexual fantasies about her was cleared yesterday of a charge of conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.

Liverpool magistrates dismissed the case against Bernard Quinn, 53, from Westonsuper-Mare, Avon, after evidence from a psychiatrist and police officers who arrested him in Liverpool on Thursday night. Mr Quinn was arrested after displaying a "determination" to approach the Princess and talk to her, the court was told.

Paul Firth, stipendiary magistrate at Liverpool, said a

reasonable tribunal could perhaps take the view that an unfortunate scene could have occurred but that would not meet the tests laid down. He said Mr Quinn had no case to answer.

Detective Constable Albert Howard-Murphy saw Mr Quinn in Chapel Street, the first venue in the visit. He asked Mr Quinn why he was in the area. Mr Quinn said he was testing security and that he wanted to ask the Princess a personal question.

DC Howard-Murphy said he was left in no doubt that Mr Quinn wanted to get close to the Princess and was prepared to breach security to do so. After the arrest DC Howard-Murphy talked to Mr Quinn



Quinn: admitted fantasy

about his obsession. DC Howard-Murphy said: "He told me that he had entertained sexual fantasies about the Princess Royal. He said he

had been involved in a motor accident after imagining a session of sex with the Princess." Mr Quinn, a father of two and former chief engineer at Rolls-Royce in Bristol, separated from his wife shortly after his accident.

Dr James Higgins, a consultant forensic psychiatrist, said Mr Quinn was a schizophrenic with extensive sexual delusory ideas about the Princess. Mr Quinn made it clear to the doctor that he did not intend to harm the Princess.

Dr Klaus Wagner, 37, from Stratford, east London, was charged with obstructing the highway after waving a placard outside the Harbour Club, Chelsea, where the Princess of Wales is a regular visitor.



Details and voucher, page 15



Simon Jenkins on the seven myths of Thatcherism page 20



Take a friend to the theatre for 30p Weekend, page 12

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AND HER SISTER

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on Newcastle v
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Simon Wilde in
South Africa on
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Internationals

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on Ben Ainsley,
Olympic sailing hope



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A HONDA SHUTTLE

Britain submits again to Strasbourg human rights judgments

Euro-sceptics denounce court

BY FRANCES GIBB
AND JILL SEERMAN

TORY Euro-sceptics were angered yesterday as the Government agreed for a further five years to give British citizens the right to petition the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and to submit to its rulings. Ministers rejected pressure from Tory rightwingers to withdraw from the court. Britons will continue to have the right to challenge ministers over alleged human rights abuses.

The move coincides with new figures showing a sharp rise in cases going from Britain to the European Commission of Human Rights, the body which acts as the first filter of claims lodged

against governments. Sir Teddy Taylor, a leading Euro-sceptic who has consistently questioned the powers of the court, said that he was astonished by the decision and asked why Parliament had not been consulted over it.

"Instead of just interpreting the law, the Court of Human Rights is effectively becoming a decision-maker on vital issues of policy and requiring various member states to throw away the right to decide these for themselves," he said.

"I think it is astonishing and worrying that the decision was made without giving Parliament the opportunity to decide whether they would wish to go ahead or whether the term should be confined to a shorter

period." A total of 1,249 files were opened on applications lodged with the commission by British citizens last year, compared with 946 the year before. The numbers have been swelled by claims over courts martial, the poll tax and from gypsies claiming the right to park caravans.

Britain produced the third highest number of applications, coming after Italy and Turkey. In the same year, 11 cases were referred to the court, which found one or more violations in four cases. Another 16 are pending. Over the past 30 years there have been 80 cases at the court against Britain and breaches were found in 37 of them.

Criticism of the court and pressure from Euro-sceptics to withdraw fol-

lowed its recent ruling condemning the killing of three IRA terrorists in September as unlawful. As a result of the ruling, the Government has paid almost £40,000 to relatives of three IRA members shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar.

A Foreign Office spokesman confirmed that the Government yesterday renewed the right of individuals to petition the court and agreed to accept its rulings as binding. Britain has already accepted a new protocol which will merge the commission and the court into a full-time body to which the Government is permanently committed.

Letters, page 21

Irish may
oppose
Nirex in
Europe

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE Irish Energy Minister said yesterday that Ireland might go to the European Court of Justice to oppose plans by Nirex, the nuclear-waste disposal company, to build an underground facility on part of the Sellafield site in Cumbria.

Emmet Stagg is believed to be the first minister from a foreign government to appear at an English public inquiry. Mr Stagg, after giving evidence in Cumbria yesterday, told a press conference that if state-owned Nirex succeeded in appealing against the refusal of planning permission Ireland might oppose it through the European Court.

He wrote to the European Commission last week expressing concern that Nirex's plan to build a £195 million rock laboratory would be a precursor to a nuclear waste dump, which Ireland views as a threat to its people through the possibility of sea pollution.

The letter questions whether Nirex's plans breach European directives on the environment. The Irish Government views the proposed laboratory, known as a Rock Characterisation Facility, as a Trojan horse that would cost so much to develop there would be pressure for approval to be given in future for a nuclear-waste dump.

Nirex's application was rejected by Cumbria County Council. The inquiry into the company's appeal is being held at nearby Cleator Moor.

Sinn Fein plan for
London office foiled
by vigilant council

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT



Jackson and Dobson:
objected to proposal

TWO Labour MPs and senior councillors have blocked an attempt by Sinn Fein to open offices in central London as the IRA's political wing attempts to set up overseas branches.

The leadership of Labour-controlled Camden Council stopped Sinn Fein renting offices in Holborn because it felt they posed a security risk to local residents. Glenda Jackson, Labour MP for Hampstead and Highgate, and Frank Dobson, MP for Holborn and St Pancras, told the council that they were opposed to any proposal to rent premises to Sinn Fein because it was "an organisation that has refused to renounce violence".

Before the ceasefire, the IRA bombed Camden High Street, Finchley Road and a Conservative club in Argyll Square, near Kings Cross station, as

part of its campaign of attacks in the capital.

A spokesman for Ms Jackson said she had also expressed alarm at the implications for council taxpayers of a likely increase in the authority's insurance premiums and the security implications of having such a particularly sensitive headquarters in the borough.

Sinn Fein, which since the ceasefire has opened offices in Washington and Brussels, is now looking for alternative premises in London. The offices, the focus for its political operations in Britain,

would be staffed by Sinn Fein representatives.

Camden council, whose chief executive Stephen Burdett once toured West Belfast with Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison, was approached several weeks ago. The person, who did not initially disclose that he was acting for Sinn Fein, was interested in a property close to a police station and a Ministry of Defence building in Holborn.

Officials offered an area at the back of the building for a rent of £3,000 a year, with a discount if repairs were carried out. It was only when references were provided that the council became aware that the building was to be used by Sinn Fein, according to a spokesman. Its legal advisers stressed that any rental should take into account political considerations, the council's insurance and public safety.

Richard Arthur, the leader of the council, said that the authority's main concern was for the safety of its residents. "If the peace process broke down, we could be exposing people to what could become a target for anti-IRA groups. The IRA let off more bombs in Camden than any other borough and of course we are 100 per cent behind the peace process."

A man was seriously ill yesterday after a paramilitary punishment beating in Northern Ireland. The 27-year-old was found on the outskirts of Ballymahinch, Co Down, suffering from serious head injuries and broken limbs.

Assembly confusion

THE Sinn Fein leadership was plunged into confusion last night when Gerry Adams rejected a Northern Ireland assembly hours after one of his closest colleagues said he would consider joining such a body (Nicholas Watt writes).

Mr Adams, the Sinn Fein president, described Unionist proposals to establish an assembly of up to 90 members as a "non-runner". Amid reports that Britain is

examining proposals for an assembly of 45 members, Mr Adams made clear that he would not accept any variation of the Unionist plan, which he described as "a stalling of the process."

His comments appeared to contradict remarks earlier in the day by Mitchell McLaughlin, the chairman of Sinn Fein, who said he would consider joining an elected body if it was limited to 45 members.

Thatcher blast fails to unnerve Prime Minister

Continued from page 1
the Government's failure to live up to its principles.

In line with the high-level damage limitation effort, most of yesterday's responses were restrained. Ray Whitney, chairman of the Positive European Group of Tory MPs, said of the speech: "It was very sad. Watching her on television, she looked old and ill and it was a pity, I think, that she felt the need to make that speech." He told

BBC Radio 4: "It was another manifestation of how difficult some people find it to give up office."

Lord Howe of Aberavon responded with regret rather than fury. He said that it was her deep hostility to Europe that had led to her damaging dismissal of the One Nation tradition. "One Nation Tories are No Nation Tories" is a cliché phrase and it is an expensive one," he told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*. "For any Conservative leader to

be capable of delivering that sentence is to represent a profound misunderstanding of the long-term purpose of the Tory Party. I fear it is her latter-day obsession with that question (Europe) that risks doing so much damage to her own reputation and even, in the last resort, to the achievements of the Government in which we all worked together."

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, said: "Open warfare has broken out

between John Major and Margaret Thatcher. The divisions now run so deep they cannot be bridged. It is a party turning in on itself and truly unfit to govern. She dismissed One Nation Conservatism with contempt. He says that he is and always has been a One Nation Conservative."

Simon Jenkins and
Roger Scruton, page 20
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Bed hunt
for pilot
in RAF
jet crash

An RAF fighter pilot who was critically injured when two Tornado jets crashed over Lincolnshire on Wednesday was turned away from two hospitals before an intensive care bed could be found. It was disclosed yesterday. He is recovering from head injuries at the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham.

Both pilots and their navigators ejected. The injured man was hurt as he ejected. Dr Chris Tyler, director of intensive care at Lincoln County Hospital where the four men were taken, said the pilot was lucky that another bed could be found so quickly. The Nottingham hospital, whose dozen intensive care beds make it one of the largest units in the country, said transfers from other hospitals were regularly accepted.

Drink dropped

The Split Drinks Co, makers of "Tilt", an alcoholic Caribbean fruit drink, agreed at the High Court to stop marketing the product and withdraw it from sale. The Coca Cola Company had claimed it would confuse consumers used to its non-alcoholic "Lilt".

Footballer guilty

James Kelly, 22, a footballer with Wolverhampton Wanderers, admitted kicking to death Peter Dunphy, 26, after an argument outside a hotel. Liverpool Crown Court accepted his guilty plea to manslaughter and remanded him on bail until February 5.

Legal move

Two QCs are to advise the Law Society on its moves to deny insurance cover to culpable conveyancers, and on whether they would breach unfair trading provisions. The Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Bingham, has said the moves could breach the law.

Sketch man dies

Colin Valdar, who became one of Fleet Street's youngest newspaper editors at the age of 34, has died, aged 77, in a London hospital after a long illness. Mr Valdar became editor of the *Sunday Pictorial* in 1953 and, six years later, editor of the *Daily Sketch*.

Special delivery

Geoff Rackham, 81, has just received a postcard 55 years after he sent it to his sister-in-law from a German POW camp. The Royal Mail traced him to his home in Rotherham when the card surfaced and they could not find the addressee. She died 30 years ago.

Death riddle

Police in Rome are investigating the death of the renowned English art forger Eric Hebborn who was found lying in the street with head injuries in the Trastevere area of the city on Thursday. Mr Hebborn, 61, who lived near Rome, died in hospital.

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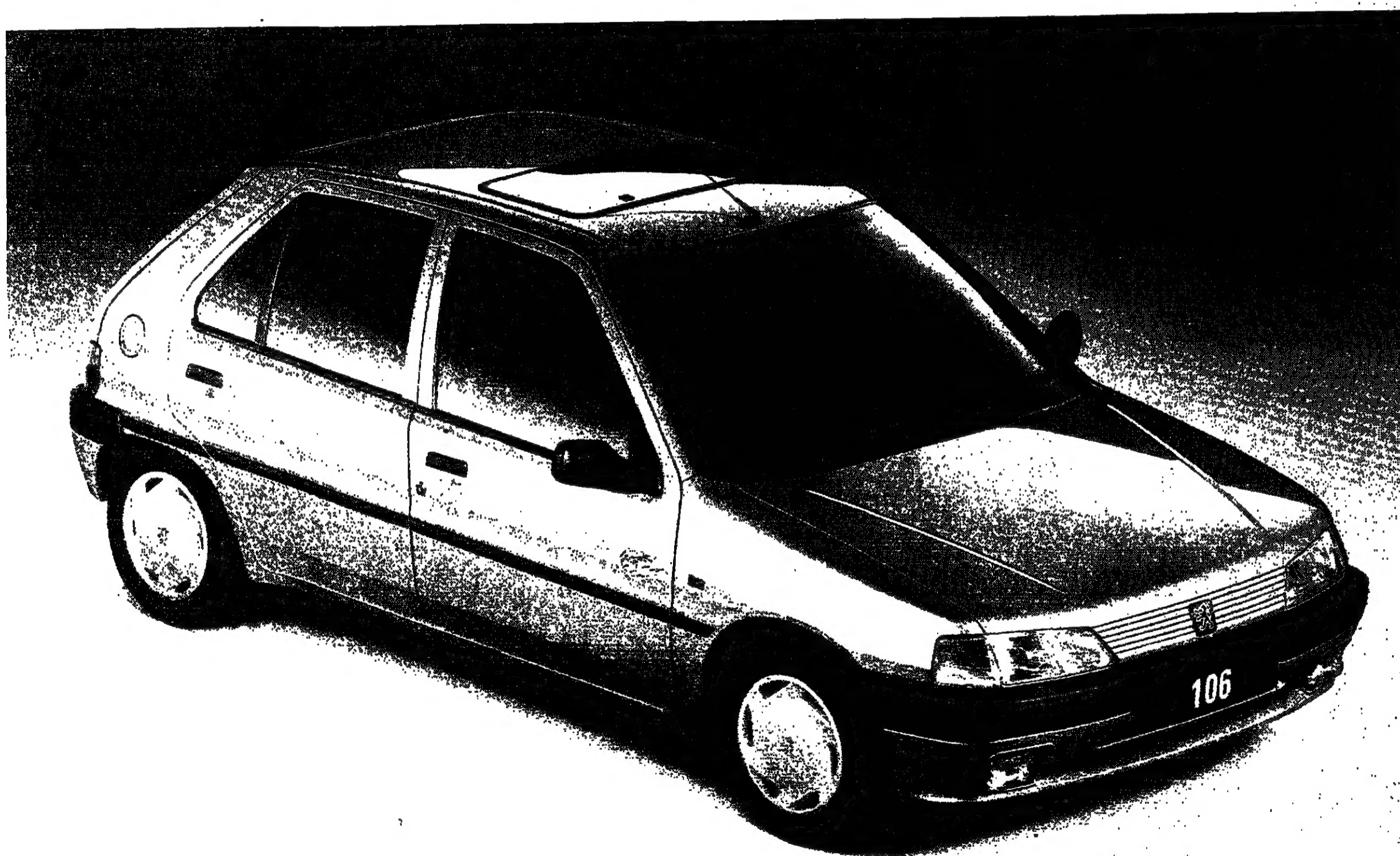
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Woman recalls posing for drawings of rich girl who would 'threem and threem until I am thick'



Joan Baverstock now, left, and as a young girl at the time she posed for Thomas Henry, her uncle, right, illustrator of the William stories

William's foe was no thinking Violet

By OUR DIARY STAFF

SHE was everything about the female sex that threatened William. Violet Elizabeth Bott was the scheming golden-haired little horror of the *Just William* books who "threamed and threamed" and deserved as good as she jolly well got from William and the Outlaws.

Yesterday the real Violet Elizabeth — or at least the inspiration behind the illustrations — was reminiscing about the days she posed as the six-year-old minx. Sitting in her Buckinghamshire home underneath a portrait of William by her uncle Thomas Henry, who illustrated the books, Joan Baverstock, 77, admitted

that she was the real Violet. "I certainly used to pose for him," she said. "And in some of the illustrations I can recognise my clothes. I remember on a train journey from Nottingham to London once when the carriage had steamed up, he drew William for me with his finger on the window."

In Richmal Crompton's stories, Violet Elizabeth is the spoilt member of an aspiring family, recently arrived in William's village — "the daughter of Mr Bott (of Bott's Digestive Sauce) who lived at the Hall". William and his gang have no respect for the sauce, believing it to be made of black beetles, but there is no getting away from her wealth, or her ghastly lip:

"Violet Elizabeth's eyes brimmed with tears. Her lip quivered... 'My fatherth rich,' she said. 'I oughter be firht becauth my fatherth rich.'"

The *Just William* Society's latest newsletter trumpets her discovery under a banner headline: *Introducing the Real Violet Elizabeth*. David Schutte, of the society, points out that the first Violet Elizabeth story was written in 1924, when Joan Baverstock was six. "Violet Elizabeth was six as well," he says. "So little Joan was the perfect model."

Mrs Baverstock says at that age she was a naughty little madam who hung around young rascals like William. "I was a little rebel in the family and I had curly hair then. Lots

and lots of curls. I could have been rescued from the Outlaws."

But she has never lisped and certainly never threatened to "threem and threem and threem until I am thick". She never even met Richmal Crompton, who wrote her speech impediment into the script. "The drawings came after the books, you see," she said. "My uncle obviously read the books and then illustrated them, perhaps using me as the model because I fitted his idea of Violet."

Earlier this week the *Times* Diary tracked down Eddie Graham, the 1940s screen *Just William*, in the sweet counter in the shop he manages in Taplow, Buckinghamshire.

Grammar school ballpoint ban wins top marks

By ROBIN YOUNG

A GRAMMAR school headmistress who has banned ballpoint pens and ordered her pupils to write with fountain pens won widespread support yesterday.

Susan Glanville, head of Invicta Girls' School in Maidstone, Kent, said: "I have always attached great importance to clear handwriting. The majority of primary schools in this area have handwriting policies which encourage the children to write well. You cannot suddenly ignore that and think a ballpoint is good enough."

Many parents had expressed their support, she said. "Not one has complained about the extra expense of having to buy a fountain pen. Of course a good fountain pen can last for years and years."

Humphrey Lyttelton, the broadcaster and jazz trumpeter who is president of the Society for the Preservation of the Ballpoint Pen, said: "People who say ballpoints make you scrawl are absolutely right. It is like trying to do figure-skating on ice wearing roller skates."

Peter Brookes, political cartoonist of *The Times* and a champion of the fountain pen, said: "I raised cheer to myself when I heard about Mrs Glanville. Ballpoints are in-

creasingly sophisticated, but they are still a meagre kind of instrument compared to the fountain pen."

Bill Stoneham, a senior economics master at Mrs Glanville's staff, said: "Many of us work as external examiners, and one of our most frequent complaints is about the illegibility of many of the papers. Most of the staff were using fountain pens before Mrs Glanville came, and of course we all do now."

But not everyone is convinced that compulsory use of the fountain pen is desirable and head teachers' leaders said it would be impossible to enforce in some parts of the country. John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads' Association, said: "There are many schools where teachers think themselves lucky if children come to school with any kind of writing instrument at all."

George Turnbull of the Associated Examining Board said: "Handwriting is very important, but if students use a ballpoint well they should be able to write clearly. If they are not disciplined to use a fountain pen properly it will not make their writing any more legible. Fountain pens do have disadvantages. They smudge and blot very easily."

Fountain pens range in price from £1.80 to models costing hundreds of pounds. Mrs Glanville uses "a very nice Parker". She said: "It was given to me by the pupils at my former school, who knew what value I placed on good clear writing. They did not have to use fountain pens, because I was only the deputy headmistress there."

The ballpoint pen was invented by Laszlo Biro in 1938 and the first 18,000 made were used by British airmen in the war. When they went on sale in 1945 they cost 55 shillings (£2.75), but were outselling fountain pens within four years.



Lyttelton: applauded fountain pen order

Teachers pass up chance of headship

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

FEWER teachers are prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of headship, with some inner-city schools left struggling for months to find a suitable candidate.

Smaller schools, which cannot offer top salaries, find it hardest to appoint a new head teacher, a survey published yesterday also disclosed. Church schools, often in small rural communities, were particularly badly hit. One in three Roman Catholic and one in five Church of England schools looking for a head had to advertise more than once last year.

The annual review of head teacher vacancies by Oxford Brookes University showed 14 per cent of secondary and 17

per cent of primary headships had to be advertised again. The turnover of secondary school heads was at its highest for six years, with 365 posts falling vacant compared with 324 the year before.

John Howson, author of the report, said the re-advertisement rate for inner London of two posts in every five was by far the worst in the country. He added: "With an ageing teaching force, the problem is unlikely to go away."

Heads' pay starts at £24,453 for the smallest primary school, rising to a maximum £53,559. The National Association of Head Teachers said staff often felt there was no point in shouldering the extra responsibility of headship.

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NHS tests computer-controlled treatment

Laser fires holes in the heart to transform patient's life

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

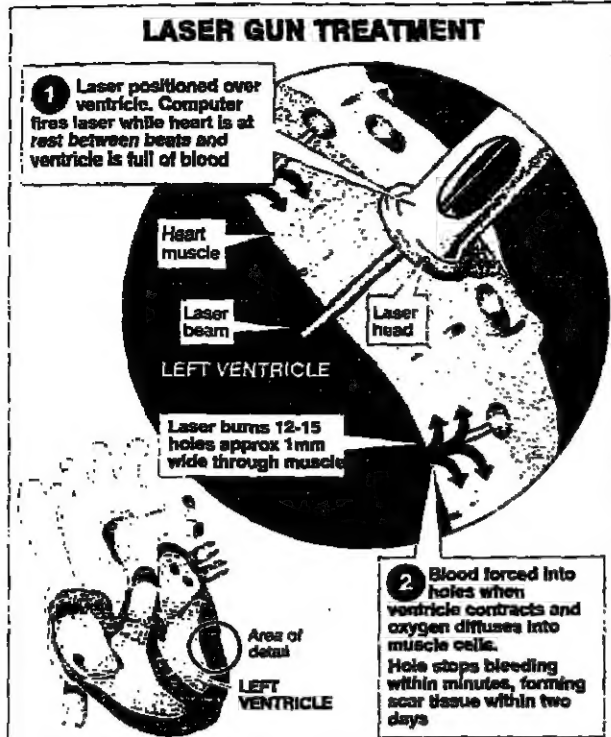
A LASER gun treatment for coronary disease that involves shooting holes in the heart is being introduced to the National Health Service.

The "heart laser" is being used to treat patients with heart disease who cannot have coronary bypass surgery. Instead of grafting new blood vessels on to the heart to replace those that have narrowed or become blocked, the laser is used to punch tiny holes through the heart wall to form new blood vessels.

The Royal Brompton Hospital in west London, the first NHS hospital to acquire the laser, has so far used it on only a few patients. The treatment has transformed the life of Manuel Espana, a retired plumber from west London, according to the hospital.

Mr Espana, 55, was housebound before the operation, unable to climb the stairs to his first-floor flat. Now, a few weeks after surgery, not only can he climb the stairs but he can walk to the shops.

Each laser hole, made by firing the gun between heartbeats, is about one millimetre in diameter, the thickness of a pencil lead. It creates a channel in the heart's wall, allowing oxygen-rich blood to reach the damaged heart muscle. As



blood seeps through each newly created channel to the surface of the heart, it clots on contact with the air, sealing the end of the hole so that the heart does not leak. Scar tissue forms within two days.

The procedure, which lasts about an hour, involves firing the computer-controlled laser

when the left ventricle of the heart — the main pumping chamber — is full of blood. The liquid absorbs the laser beam and prevents it burning a hole right through the heart.

The treatment, known as transmyocardial revascularisation, is being investigated by a team from Papworth Hospi-

tal, Cambridge. The team is conducting a trial on NHS patients at the Bupa Cambridge Lea Hospital, which has bought a heart laser, in the first joint research venture between Bupa and the NHS.

Although the technique is in use in America, British specialists were sceptical at first. John Wallwork, consultant cardiothoracic surgeon at Papworth, said: "We thought it was very interesting but mad. The problem is if you make a hole with a drill it causes damage to the tissue which triggers the clotting process, blocking the hole. But the laser causes so little damage that the blood doesn't clot (until it reaches the surface of the heart)."

"The Royal Brompton is not the first to treat NHS patients in this way. These techniques are still under evaluation. Everybody hopes there is value in them but until the trial is complete we won't know."

Under NHS rules, hospitals are not supposed to purchase new equipment until its value has been proved in properly controlled trials. The heart laser costs £700,000.

Mr Wallwork said: "If it works it is likely to be an important advance in the treatment of heart disease. It will give us another brand-new technique for treating patients with chest pain."



Jessica Hodson, 10, with amphibian friends at the campaign launch yesterday

Vanishing pondlife spawns frog hunt

By NICK NUTTALL

A CAMPAIGN to solve the mystery of the nation's disappearing frogs was launched yesterday. Frogwatch will enlist the skills of up to 60,000 children to monitor spawning times in ponds to discover if global warming is interfering with reproduction.

The scheme, co-ordinated by the Wildlife Trusts, which represents the county wildlife charities, is being backed by Professor David Bellamy and BHS. It comes amid growing worldwide alarm among scientists, conservationists and the public over a dramatic decline in frogs, toads and newts.

In Britain, since 1992, there have been increasing reports of large numbers of frogs found dead in ponds. The animals appear emaciated and others have been found with bleeding mouths, frozen feet and detached limbs.

Professor Bellamy said yesterday: "Mobilising the acute observational powers of young people all over the country will provide researchers with extremely valuable information."

Frogwatch survey packs will be available in BHS stores from February 18-25. Children are asked to note the appearance and location of frog spawn and log when and if it turns into tadpoles and then frogs.

Lottery purge on Irish border run

By NICHOLAS WATT, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

CAMELOT pledged yesterday to crack down on retailers in Northern Ireland who knowingly allowed couriers from the Republic to profit by bringing National Lottery entries over the border. The retailers would have their operating contracts terminated, Louise White, Camelot's head of public affairs, said.

Scores of couriers run thousands of completed entries to outlets over the border every week. Their customers fill out the slips in newsagents in Dublin, Cork and Galway, which display posters saying "Play the UK lottery here".

The punters pay between £1.20 and £1.30 per line — instead of the usual £1 — and the profit is split between the newsagent and the courier. Every Thursday, the couriers pick up the completed entries, which bear the players' names. On Thursday night The Times found a courier from Dublin entering hundreds of tickets at the BP service station at Killeen, Co

Down, less than 100 yards over the border.

The courier, who refused to give his name, denied any illegality. "I am providing a courier service," he said. "People drive from the south to cross the border, so what is the difference?" He estimated he had made £10,000 in the past year. "There is a huge interest. Prizes are much bigger than the Irish lottery."

Prizes in the Irish lottery have varied from £500,000 to £4.4 million. The duty manager of the service station refused to comment.

In Dublin, a newsagent is to appear in court on Monday charged under the 1956 Gaming and Lotteries Act, which bans the import of lottery tickets.

Members of the Muslim Sangat Community Centre in Keighley, West Yorkshire, meet tomorrow to consider returning a £375,000 National Lottery grant, after some complained that gambling was forbidden by the Koran.

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Newbury cook produces nutritious meals from Crimean cauldron to raise morale

Roux-trained chef hands protesters victory on a plate

BY ADRIAN LEE

IF AN army marches on its stomach, it is no wonder that the battalion of protesters at the Newbury bypass appears to have had the upper hand this week.

While the security guards hired to mind the site grumble of low morale, which they blame on awful food, the protesters are enjoying the services of a restaurant-trained chef who daily bolsters their spirits with freshly cooked vegetarian delights.

Yesterday David Lenaghan, 28, once a £9,000-a-year commis chef with Albert Roux, woke at 5am to light his crude grate fire, built over four bricks, and to serve gallons of

porridge, fresh fruit, nuts, chocolate and barley drink to his 200 troops.

As protesters set off to try to prevent work on the bypass for a fourth day, they could look forward to a dinner menu of six-vegetable Thai stir-fry in chilli sauce, potato latka, three-bean soup, cooked beetroot and fresh fruit salad for dessert if they avoided arrest.

The guards, billed on a farm, take bulk delivery of chicken pieces, beefburgers, bread, cabbage, eggs, tomato ketchup and cheap fizzy drinks. The standard of cooking has become a standing joke among the 200 men and women working for Reliance

Security. Mr Lenaghan, from Chichester, West Sussex, arrived less than a week ago but his culinary reputation has spread quickly through the ten protest camps along the 9½-mile route.

From his woodland kitchen, equipped with a 12-gallon cauldron dating from the Crimean War and nicknamed "Puffing Billy", he takes food orders on a mobile telephone. Drums of his food, created on a budget of £60 a day, are dispatched to other camps.

He turned his back on Roux, where he provided buffets for London business leaders, two years ago. He has not yet told his parents, both Conservatives, about his new life. "I feel I am making a positive contribution to a positive cause. I hated working in London; the pecking order in the kitchen, the egos, the ingratitude. Here, people thank you for cooking for them."

His shoestring budget consists mainly of donations and conditions are far from ideal. "Getting heat is difficult because the wood is often wet and the kitchen gets rained on. The worst thing is definitely the smoke, but we've hopefully got a propane stove coming. I



David Lenaghan in his woodland kitchen: "I feel I am making a positive contribution to a positive cause"

am not vegetarian myself but most of the people here or either very strict vegetarians or vegans. That means no eggs or milk and for a chef they are the main ingredients, so it's a bit limited."

Another 180 security staff have been sent home because of leaking tents. In addition to grumbling about the food,

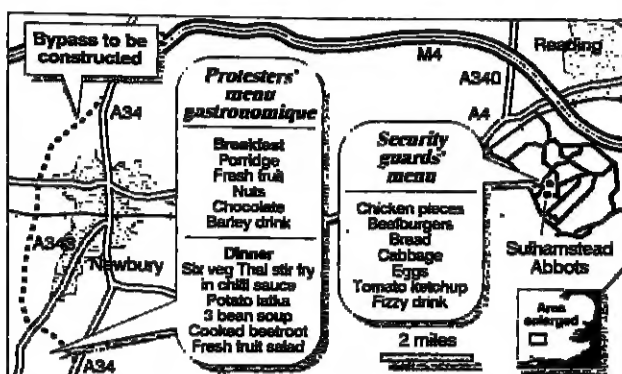
some have complained about lack of showers, poor pay and living quarters covered in mud.

A former guard from Kent told his regional television station, Meridian: "The cold hit every part of your body and there were no drying facilities. The conditions were so bad it was unbelievable and the food

there was not fit for a dog. It was awful." Reliance declined a request to show a reporter the guards' camp.

Mr Lenaghan, who plans to stay until the end of the protest, said: "Their diet sounds very stodgey, whereas I try to make sure I give people nutritious food. If the food is good I think it helps morale."

Much of the produce he uses is organically grown and his makeshift kitchen is crammed with shelves of soya beans, wholegrain rice and fruit. It is a far cry from the days when he was trained by the Japanese master-chef Hiroshi Hiyashi and won a job with Roux on the recommendation of a friend.



£9m bypass starts sell-off

BY JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE privatisation of Britain's trunk roads began in earnest yesterday when the Government signed a £9 million contract with a private consortium to build and operate a bypass in Northumberland.

The two-mile road on the A69 near the village of Haltwhistle will be designed, financed, built and run for the next 30 years by Roadlink, a group of six companies, including two from Italy.

Roadlink will be paid "shad-

ow tolls" by the Government, according to the number of vehicles that use the bypass, although there will be no charge to drivers. As well as the contract to build the bypass, expected to be opened by the end of next year, the deal gives the group responsibility for the management of the entire 52-mile A69 route between Newcastle and Carlisle.

The level of shadow tolls is not being disclosed but it is known that Roadlink will re-

ceive a bonus for any safety improvements it makes to the roads and will be charged a levy every time a lane is out of use. Daily traffic on the A69 is forecast to rise from 38,000 vehicles to 57,000 by 2007.

The contract is the first of 13, worth a total of £1 billion, due to be signed under the Government's design, build, finance and operate roads programme, aimed at transferring responsibility for roads to the private sector.

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New faces fail to save Spitting Image satirists in a political age of all things moderate

Last stretch for rubber stars who miss Mrs Thatcher

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

POLITICIANS, royals and showbusiness celebrities are bracing themselves for a final savaging from the latex puppets of *Spitting Image*, the longest-running satirical television show.

A host of newcomers is joining the cast of 800 puppets for the final series, which starts tomorrow.

Labour's spin-doctor Peter Mandelson will be depicted as a hissing snake, wound around the torso of Tony Blair; Camilla Parker Bowles will be shown in the same bed as the Prince and Princess of Wales; Prince Charles will meet O.J. Simpson in a war and tell him how much he admires his work.

New faces also include the American film director Quentin Tarantino and the Gallagher brothers from the pop group Oasis.

Mr Mandelson said he was flattered to have made it on to *Spitting Image*. "I'm nobody's puppet... The Tories are always complaining about my alleged qualities



The Prince of Wales in bed with his wife and Camilla Parker Bowles, and a snake-like Peter Mandelson with Tony Blair. Sketches will be more extreme, says the producer



tion of what they are all about. On the Government side things seem to be getting too. Michael Heseltine is still a dream to do and we are going to portray Michael Portillo, now Defence Secretary, as a South American general."

He wants *Spitting Image* to go out "with a bang". As this series is being transmitted in the unusually late slot of 11.15pm, he was able to take even more liberties than usual. "The sketches will be much more extreme. There will not be any rudeness at the expense of humour, but as this is the last series we decided to up the level of satire," he said.

Mr Pilbrow's great regret is that the programme will not survive long enough to see a Labour government. "We were born under Thatcher and will die under Major. It is a tragedy."

Roger Law, co-creator of the show, said that the £2,000 puppets would be put up for auction after the series. He expects they will be much sought after by collectors — and by the subjects.

and now they can get annoyed by the rubber version of me too," he said.

The series, widely imitated around the world, began in the Thatcher era and its

demise 12 years later has sparked a debate about whether television satire can thrive at a time when politicians from all sides are converging on the centre and

where there is a conspicuous lack of inspirational, tub-thumping leadership.

Audiences have fallen gradually from 15 million in the 1980s to 6.5 million. Two

years ago, the Independent Television Commission commented that "the originality and wit of *Spitting Image* has declined".

Giles Pilbrow, the show's

producer, said: "There was a difficult time, when the late John Smith was leader of the Labour Party, with Major and Clinton in power. They were not as easy to lampoon

as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock." Now he thinks there is more of interest. "The Labour Party is a complete joy because there is now a public percep-

Black trooper to leave Life Guards

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE first black soldier to join the Household Cavalry as a trooper has been discharged from the Army on medical grounds.

Trooper Mark Campbell, 28, who became the first black soldier to ride alongside the Queen on state occasions, is to leave after a year serving with the Life Guards. He was viewed by the Army as a standard-bearer for other black recruits to join the Household Cavalry's prestigious regiments.

He was the first black soldier to be taken on as a trooper although there are others with the Household Cavalry in the band and maintenance section. However, after developing a serious skin complaint arising

from an in-growing beard, he found he was unable to wear the metal chin strap of his ceremonial plumed helmet.

Army sources said it was impossible for him to fulfil his duties. "For weeks he couldn't ride the horse assigned to him and his commanding officer posted him from Knightsbridge to the training section at Windsor," one said.

In August last year, Trooper Campbell made history when he rode beside the Queen, his colonel-in-chief, as part of her 18-strong escort on VJ-Day. After his transfer, he alleged that he faced racial taunts but this was denied by the Army, which emphasised yesterday that his discharge had nothing to do with discrimination.

Trooper Campbell, from Sedgley, near Wolverhampton, asked to be returned to his unit at Knightsbridge barracks but his commanding officer turned him down, because he was still unable to carry out the ceremonial duties. He is to be given a four-week resettlement course in driving before leaving the Army in March. A spokesman said: "Trooper Campbell did well in his training course and it's a shame that he is unable to pursue his Army career."

The latest recruitment figures show that only 46 blacks out of a total of 5,740 recruits joined the Army in 1993-94.



Campbell claimed he was victim of racism

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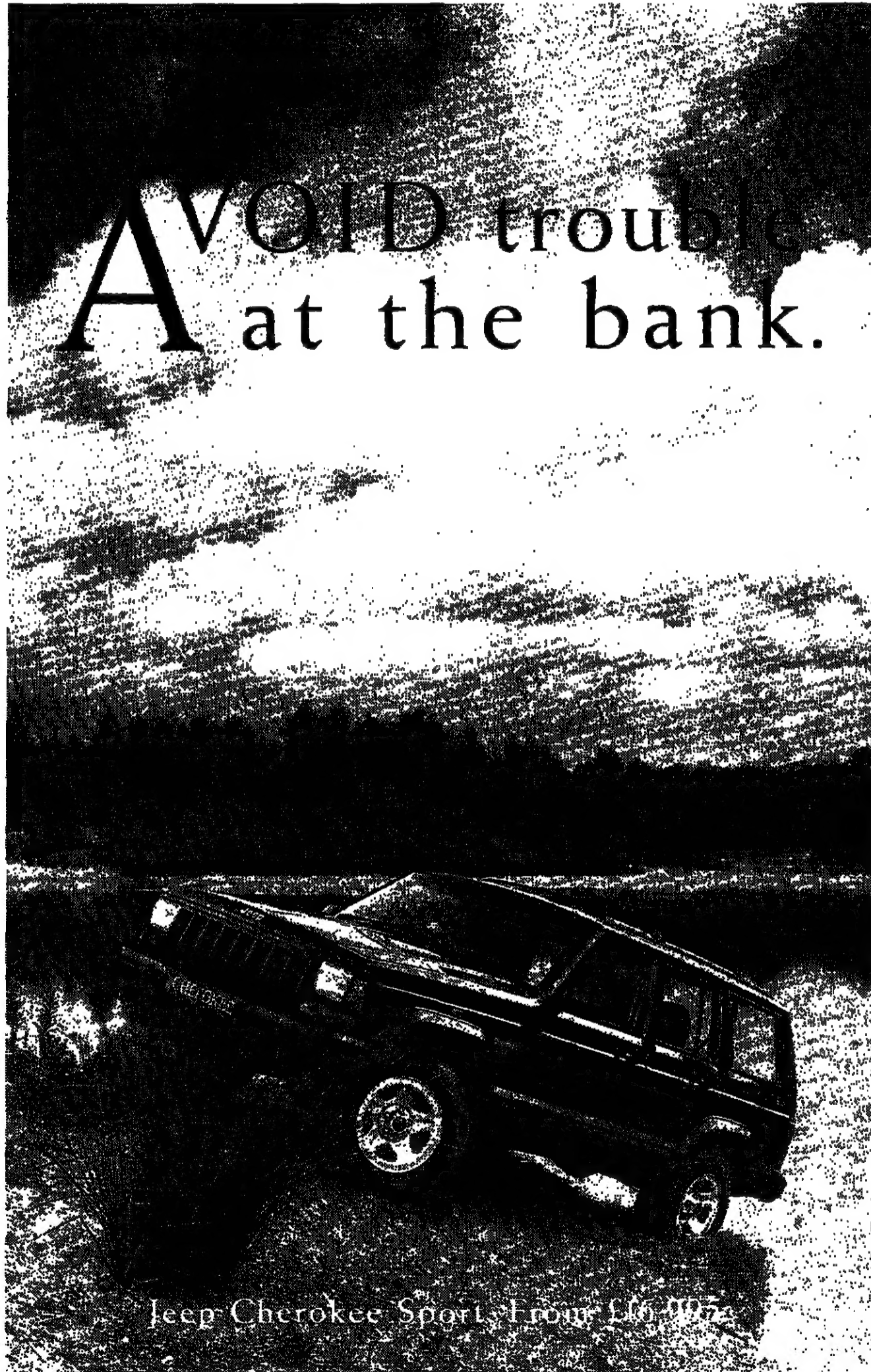
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Search for victims of Bosnian Serb massacres as US President meets his troops

War crimes team told of 8,000 bodies in mineshafts

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

ALLEGATIONS that up to 8,000 bodies may be buried in mineshafts in northwest Bosnia guarded by Serb soldiers have been passed to the United Nations war crimes tribunal for investigation.

The latest claims of a massacre, however, will be impossible to establish until investigators can get proper access to the Serb-held areas.

Witnesses have claimed that Serbs have been emptying mass graves of bodies and dumping them in a disused mine outside the town of Ljubija, between Sanski Most and Prijedor, all Bosnian Serb-occupied locations.

The allegations will be checked by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, which has representatives in Bosnia. The tribunal has been aware of past allegations that Serbs have been hiding bodies in mineshafts. Graham Blewitt, deputy prosecutor, said yesterday an earlier war crimes body, disbanded in April 1994,

reported similar allegations, and the tribunal saw gaining access to the region as one of its priorities in the light of the Dayton, Ohio, peace agreement.

Mr Blewitt said it was difficult to stop evidence being destroyed. "Even if that has occurred and the tribunal is able to gather evidence that there has been the destruction of evidence, that in itself is evidence."

He expressed confidence that investigators supported by the Nato-led peace implementation force (Ifor) would soon gain access to suspected mass grave sites on Bosnian Serb territory. He said the sites could be secured by the troops until exhumations began in early spring.

A spokesman for Ifor in Sarajevo said it was not the responsibility of Nato troops to search for mass graves. It would be a matter for the UN war crimes tribunal and also for the Red Cross. Under the



American Major-General William Nash, left, greets Russian Colonel Aleksandr Lentsov after the first Russian plane with troops landed at Tuzla

Dayton agreement which was signed as a treaty in Paris last month, any former warring party in Bosnia suspected of digging a mass grave is required to grant access to "grave registration personnel" from the accusing party to recover the bodies.

Reports yesterday suggested that decomposed bodies had been discovered by British

Nato troops who are responsible for patrolling sector south-west, which also covers the Serb-held territory in the north, including Ljubija. The 2nd Battalion Light Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Barry, is based in Ljubija.

A spokesman for the British headquarters at Gorzki Valov in central Bosnia said the

British units had found no evidence of a mass grave on Serb-held territory. He said about 12 bodies had been discovered in the area, but they had all been killed in "military action" and were above ground, not buried.

Christopher Girod, a senior official from the International Committee of the Red Cross, who is in Sarajevo for a

prisoner exchange planned for early next week, said that if bodies were found their identity would be checked, if possible, against the list of people from all the warring factions who were still registered as missing.

The Red Cross does not publish a list of the missing because it is such a politically sensitive issue, although M

Girod admitted it was in the thousands. The Bosnian Government claims that 24,000 Muslims are still missing, including 8,000 from Srebrenica after the enclave in eastern Bosnia fell to the Serbs in July last year. Three thousand are known to have been detained by the Serbs in Srebrenica; the fate of the remaining 5,000 is unknown.

Russians join US forces

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE first batch of Russian paratroops landed at Tuzla in northern Bosnia yesterday to join the Americans in the Nato-led peace mission.

Russia is sending two airborne battalions and logistics units — a small brigade of about 1,600. The 120 Russians will be followed by the rest on trains later this month.

The Russians were welcomed by Major-General William Nash, commander of the American forces in Bosnia. They will be based east of Tuzla, near the town of Breko in the disputed Posavina corridor.

Half of the 60,000-strong Nato-led forces have now arrived. About 8,800 British troops are in Bosnia and another 4,200 will be deployed by January 18. Today three batteries of British 155mm AS90 self-propelled heavy guns will arrive at Split.

Yesterday Serb leaders suspended a threat to evacuate up to 100,000 Serb families from Sarajevo and burn their homes. They asked Carl Bildt, the UN's civilian head in Bosnia, to appeal to people to stay in their homes. The Serbs had threatened to leave the Bosnian capital after Nato chiefs refused to delay the handover of their districts to the Bosnian Government.

Clinton uses Tuzla visit to bolster pact

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton flew to Bosnia-Herzegovina last night to meet American troops and encourage the region's warring parties to remain faithful to the peace accord reached in Dayton, Ohio.

Ostensibly, Mr Clinton is using the fleeting visit to his troops in Tuzla as a photo-opportunity for his coming campaign and as a diversion from the trials of the budget impasse in Washington. However, he is also meeting President Izetbegovic of Bosnia and President Tudjman of Croatia to lend his diplomatic weight to the terms of the peace initiative.

Already there are signs that the Nato mission is under pressure, with violence in Sarajevo and fighting threatened between Muslim and Croat partners in Mostar. One person was killed and six were wounded this week when a rocket-propelled grenade was fired at a tram in Sarajevo, in the worst attack since Nato forces were deployed last month.

Mr Clinton, who left the

United States last night with an entourage of 100, including White House aides and senior national security advisers, is taking every precaution to ensure that his visit will be risk-free.

Army commanders at Tuzla have pressed Bosnian Serb forces to leave Mount Vis, a hill within easy artillery range of the base, and an armada of Apache helicopters is expected to patrol the area.

An advance party of 45 security personnel has been deployed in Tuzla and others have been sent to Hungary and Zagreb, thought to be the final leg of the journey before the President returns to Washington on Sunday night.

During his visit to Croatia, Mr Clinton will urge Dr Tudjman to remain faithful to the Dayton terms for Eastern Slavonia, the last region still held by rebel Serbs after the Croatian offensive last year. A UN protectorate is to oversee the demilitarised zone for two years before Eastern Slavonia is handed back to the authority of Zagreb.

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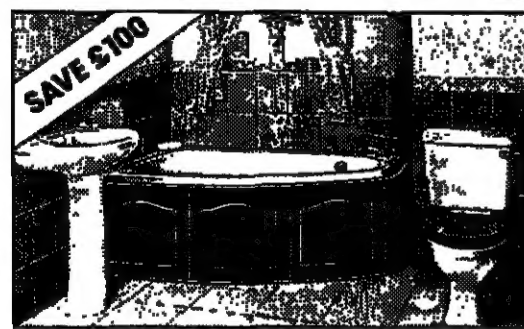
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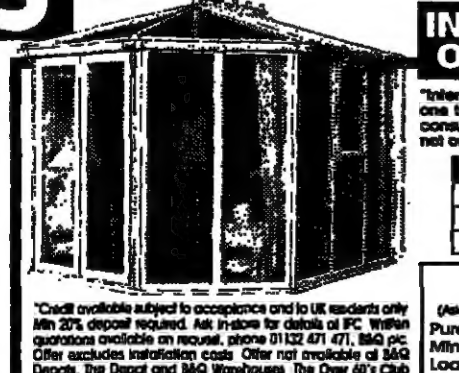
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by

Vernon Coleman

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New York sharpens legal axe for tree vandals

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

A NEW category of crime has been identified in New York — "premeditated arboricide". To counteract rising tree vandalism, the Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, yesterday introduced still penalties for New Yorkers who cut down or mistreat trees.

Culprits will face prison sentences of up to a year and fines of \$15,000 (£10,000). Mr Giuliani signed his tree Bill at the urging of his arboricide-inclined Parks Commissioner and in response to a recent surge in urban tree felling.

In the last six months tree abuse has more than doubled, and New York's 500,000 street trees have further dwindled. Three cases highlighted the trend. In the Bay Ridge neighbourhood, 44 trees were destroyed to clear an apartment block's view of the harbour. In Elmhurst three trees were toppled on a whim, while in Astoria a billboard company employee took his axe to two London planes and five honey locust trees which were obscuring an advertising hoarding.

The mayorality nicknamed the cases "the Butcher of Bay Ridge", "the Elmhurst Executioner" and "the Astoria Arbicide". The Astoria man was this week given 500 hours of community service and was told by Acting Justice James Griffin that he was fortunate to escape a custodial sentence. Future culprits may not be so lucky.

In addition to stricter penalties, Mr Giuliani yesterday announced the introduction of a 24-hour, rapid-reaction tree security team. If citizens see anyone chopping down a tree, they are urged to summon help. The Mayor also did some pruning of his own, reducing the bureaucracy for tree-planting permission. "One Stop Tree Shops" will in future ease the procedure. Would-be planters will simply dial 360-TREE to be dealt with at once.

Parke Spencer, a city spokesman, said: "We are going after people who arbitrarily destroy trees. The benefits of trees to people are tremendous. They provide clean air, shade, and help property values."

Hillary Clinton goes on TV to counter claims of wrongdoing

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON

HILLARY CLINTON last night flatly denied the various allegations that are threatening to engulf her in spite of mounting evidence that supports them.

Interviewed by ABC television, the embattled First Lady denied ordering the 1993 sacking of the White House travel office or obstructing investigations into the suicide of Vincent Foster, the deputy White House counsel.

She forswore knowledge of fraudulent transactions by Madison Guaranty, the failed Arkansas bank at the heart of the Whitewater affair, for which she did legal work.

Mrs Clinton was even questioned about reports that she had thrown a bible or a lamp at her husband. "I have a pretty good arm," she replied. "If I'd thrown a lamp at somebody, I think you'd have known about it."

She hoped she was not becoming a liability "because I love my husband and I really believe in what he's doing and I want to help him". She admitted getting "a little distressed", but vowed: "We'll keep ploughing through."

Mrs Clinton's veracity has become such an issue that even the authorship of her new book on children is being questioned. The White House issued a press release insisting that the book was Mrs Clinton's work and summoned reporters to examine the handwritten manuscript.

However, *The Washington Post* noted that the publisher paid \$120,000 (£78,000) to Barbara Feinman, a teacher of journalism, to elicit Mrs Clinton's thoughts and help to draft the book. She is not credited by name.

Mrs Clinton said she had been concerned about mismanagement in the travel office but insisted she "did not make the decisions" to sack the seven. A memorandum by David Watkins, a former White House aide, said there would have been "hell to pay" if he had defied her wishes and not sacked them.

Mrs Clinton has said she did "minimal" work for Madison, but her billing records show she did 60 hours with two bursts of activity.

One occurred as the bank hatched a crooked property deal, the second as it sought approval from state regulators appointed by Mr Clinton for a



Hillary Clinton talks to Barbara Walters, who interviewed her for an ABC News programme, which was aired yesterday. Mrs Clinton's questions included one on whether she had thrown a lamp or bible at her husband

recapitalisation plan designed to avert bankruptcy. Mrs Clinton said that she was unaware of any fraudulent dealings by Madison.

Mrs Clinton has also said a Rose Law Firm colleague, Richard Massey, enlisted Madison as a client and did most of the work. In Senate testimony Mr Massey cast doubt on that account.

She was asked about telephone logs showing calls between her and a New York friend after Foster's suicide. Mrs Clinton's chief of staff and two other White House

aides searched Foster's office. Files were removed, and investigators were barred from searching the room.

"There were no documents taken out of Vincent Foster's office on the night he died, and I didn't direct anyone to interfere in any investigation," Mrs Clinton said. "We were grieving and some of those conversations consisted of us sobbing on the phone."

Capital closes: Blizzards forced the Government to shut down again yesterday when all federal employees were told to stay at home.

Novel mirrors life at White House

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

HILLARY CLINTON has just published a tremendously worthy book on children, but the real talk of the White House is of a scurrilously irreverent new roman à clef by an anonymous writer with intimate knowledge of the Clintons and their habits.

Primary Colours is a thinly disguised account of Mr Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign that has half Washington trying to guess the author's identity a month before publication. Those who have read the proofs profess astonishment at the accuracy of the details and how closely the book captures the characters of the players.

The Clinton analogue is Jack Stanton, a Southern Governor with an eye for pretty women, a passion for

policies and an amazing ability to empathise with voters. His wife, Susan, is smart, cold and a ruthless commander. When she gets agitated her husband comes up behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders to calm her, which is what Mr Clinton does.

The novel is about a campaign adviser, a black version of George Stephanopoulos, who is troubled by the candidate's tactics and sleeps with Mandy Grunwald, alias Daisy Green, the campaign's media adviser. Matthew Cooper, of *The New Republic* magazine, insists that is fiction, because he is dating Ms Grunwald. The only real clue is the dedication: "For my spouse, living proof that flamboyance and discretion are not mutually exclusive."



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Fury as eight Americans are picked to shoot one animal each in state cull

Indians file court case in crusade to protect the buffalo

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AMERICAN INDIANS have gone to court to try to stop a buffalo hunt this weekend in New Mexico. The action illustrates the successful return of the buffalo from near-extinction and the enduring appeal to American sportsmen of the brooding, rip-snorting *Bison bison*.

The planned hunt is a small cull of the state's official herd of buffalo which grazes on government land. A mere eight beasts, all elderly bulls, have been selected for the chop. But to Indians the slaughter is an insult to a symbol of their culture. In affidavits presented to a district court in Santa Fe, the Inter-Tribal Buffalo Co-operative accused the state of New Mexico of violating the National Environmental Protection Act and of failing to treat buffalo with respect.

There is certainly an element of cruelty in the proceedings. Eight local men have been selected by lucky draw to shoot dead one buffalo each. So tame are the animals — if

approached, they will not move — that the act of destruction will not call for great skill. However, the stuffed head of a buffalo bull remains a prized trophy and can do wonders for one's reputation down at the boney store.

The buffalo was hunted to near oblivion in the 1800s. From a high point of 60 million, there were as few as 1,000 buffalo in existence in North America by 1889. Today, after extensive conservation, about 160,000 exist in the United States and Canada.

State officials say the culling is a scientific measure which will eventually strengthen the herd. By killing the old bulls they will lower the ratio of breeding-age bulls to cows in the New Mexico herd. Opponents of the hunt have offered to transport the animals to another part of the United States, where they could roam unmolested on 10 million acres of Indian reservations until the natural end of their lives. Mark Hecker, director of the co-operative, which



The American bison, championed by Indians as a symbol of their culture. Hunted almost to extinction in the last century, it is making a comeback

helps Indian tribes with bison husbandry, said: "There is something better to do than simply blow the legs off these animals just because they happen to be standing in the wrong place." Culling and random killing of out-of-bounds buffalo has also been

conducted surreptitiously in Montana, although it is now done by state wardens rather than locals. Carlos Tsosie, for the Picuris Pueblo tribe in New Mexico, said: "To Indian people this is a continuation of the genocide the Federal Government waged when it killed

60 million buffalo and nine million Indians. We look on this as senseless slaughter." Public thinking on buffalo has changed in recent years. In 1987 two East Coast academics, Frank and Deborah Popper, were ridiculed when they proposed in a paper that

the short-grass regions of east Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska and Kansas be opened to buffalo herds. The Poppers cited the remarkable human depopulation of these areas since the Twenties and a reduction in the beef market, but local people gave them a

dusty reception. In the intervening nine years, the Popper theory seems to have started to turn into practice. Government agencies are converting land to buffalo grazing and the Nature Conservancy, a private body, has bought countless acres to assist buffalo.

González ally faces inquiry

Madrid: A former Spanish Interior Minister has been confined to the country while the Supreme Court investigates his role in a 1980s "dirty war" on Basque guerrillas. The court's decision is a blow to Felipe González, the Socialist Prime Minister, who faces general elections in March.

José Barriónuevo is one of the party's senior figures in the election campaign. Señor González said yesterday he believed in the innocence of the former minister who served from 1982 to 1988. The party posted his bail of 15 million pesetas (£80,500). But one of his accusers said Señor Barriónuevo "is now presumed guilty rather than presumed innocent". (Reuters)

French snub

Bastia, Corsica: Jean-Louis Debré, the French Interior Minister, snubbed a truce offer by Corsican nationalists behind a wave of bomb blasts over demands for greater autonomy for the island. (AFP)

Nazi reject

Zurich: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, 80, the retired soprano, admitted she had applied to join the Nazi Party in 1940, saying it was to enable her to continue performing. Her request had been rejected. (AFP)

Space shuffle

Houston: The jets of the space shuttle *Endavour* were fired to enable it to dodge a dead US satellite that would have come within a mile of it. NASA said the shuttle and its crew of six were in no danger. (AP)

Seoul charges

Seoul: Chun Doo Hwan, the former President of South Korea, and five aides were charged with corruption, the latest move in a legal action that has put two former heads of state in jail. (Reuters)

Bed of nails

Delhi: An Indian, who since 1952 has grown the world's longest fingernails — up to 52 in — on his left hand, wants to sell them because he cannot sleep at night for fear of breaking them. (AFP)

Yemeni habit of chewing the qat exacts heavy economic toll

FROM MICHAEL DYWID
IN SANA'A

FARMERS grow rich on it: consumers get high on it, and government revenues are swelled by taxes levied on it. But the national penchant for chewing the leaves of a small bush called qat is distorting the Yemeni economy.

In a country almost the size of France, where only 3 per cent of the land can be cultivated, somewhere between a third and a half is devoted to the cultivation of qat —

the so-called vice of the Red Sea. Chewing qat is as much a habit in Yemen as drinking beer is in Britain. It is easy to grow, it sells for a high price, and more and more farmers are being lured into abandoning traditional agricultural products for the substantial financial rewards that qat brings.

Qat or *Catha edulis foisk* contains a natural amphetamine called cathinone. Its bright green leaves are chewed in cuds until they become a paste. The juice is either swallowed or spat out. Over several

hours, a large ball accumulates in the cheek, making the chewer appear as if he has a billiard ball in his mouth.

To the uninitiated, qat tastes a bit like privet: extremely bitter and very unpleasant. Yemenis, who have consumed qat for hundreds of years, insist, however, that the "magic leaf" makes them feel happy and alert. Moreover, it is an alternative to alcohol acceptable in the Koran.

The economic consequences of qat cultivation are becoming in-

creasingly serious, however. Yemen imports more than \$600 million (£389 million) in food a year, almost half the value of Yemen's current account deficit, due to the scarcity of fertile land, and the excessive amount given over to qat.

Moreover, the working day stops at about 1pm, so that the estimated 90 per cent of the population who indulge in the habit can haggle over the price in the qat markets, and then retire to chew the leaves. This has a big effect on productivity.

During Britain's days as a colonial

power in Aden, attempts to ban the consumption of qat proved futile, and usually ended in riots. But fears that qat was a narcotic proved unfounded. According to a 1980 United Nations report, however, prolonged chewing of qat could lead to dental and gastric diseases, cirrhosis of the liver, loss of sleep, hypertension and cerebral haemorrhage. Studies published in the *Lancet* have also suggested that it can lead to violent behaviour and paranoid psychosis.

Qat has been banned in the

United States, Canada, Scandinavia, France, Italy, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. It remains widely used, however, in Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. It is even exported to Britain, one of the few Western countries where it has not been banned, to meet the demand of the immigrant communities.

The high profits make it pointless for farmers to cultivate anything else. There seems to be no antidote for the mild stimulant, which exacts a heavy toll on national economies and the health of consumers.

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Britain asked to halt fundraising by Tamil Tigers

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AMID reports that Sri Lanka is massing troops for a new attack on Tamil separatists, Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Foreign Minister, appealed yesterday to Britain to crack down on fund-raising by the Tamil Tigers.

Mr Kadirgamar said the Tigers often used intimidation and threats against Tamil families in Sri Lanka to force moderates to support terrorist activity.

Mr Kadirgamar said supporters of the Tigers were raising £250,000 a month in Britain, and more in Canada, Australia, America and other places where there were large communities. In talks on Monday with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, he will urge the Government to take a tougher line over the use of Britain as a centre for propaganda and subversion by Tamil Tigers.

Admitting that Colombo could not match the Tamils' resources in putting across its views and policies, he said that most governments, including Britain and India, were nevertheless sympathetic to Sri Lanka's efforts to grant autonomy to the Tamil areas. But he saw little chance of a settlement without the elimination of Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tamil Tigers' commander, whom he likened to the leader of a fanatical cult.

He said the world condemned the use of children as fighters, brainwashed by propaganda and given suicide capsules to swallow if caught. He admitted, however, that until recently Colombo had a poor human rights record, and could not command sympathy until it had passed laws against torture, introduced human rights training for the armed forces, set up a commission to investigate abuses and lifted the state of emergency in most of the country — all of which was now in place.

Tourism, the country's main earner after textiles, had held up well and had recovered after last year's bombing of the oil storage tanks. But Mr Kadirgamar admitted that he was troubled by the growth of sex tourism and child prostitution. He said all in the region suffered from this, because of the vast sums that poor families could earn. He saluted recent Western laws to prosecute paedophiles who abused children overseas and hoped to discuss this issue, too, with Britain.

Another concern he has made a priority in his 18 months in office is the ill-treatment of Sri Lankans, especially housemaids, in the Middle East. He has set up an inter-governmental task force to see what could be done, and will next month hold talks in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf to see how the rights of Sri Lankan workers there can be better protected.



Hazel Burgess in Sydney yesterday with the skull which is believed to be that of Thomas Paine. She and her husband bought the remains from an antique dealer



Paine: founding father of US independence

DNA tests on 'Thomas Paine skull'

Sydney: The University of Queensland is "fingerprinting" a skull which is thought to be that of Thomas Paine, a founding father of American independence, to match its genetic makeup with those claiming to be his descendants.

Hazel Burgess, an anthropologist whose husband, John, says he is a descendant, bought the skull from an antique dealer in 1988. The dealer had bought it in Wales, and claimed it belonged to Paine. (Reuters)

Freezing smog strangles Delhi

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

IT IS not quite Blizzard '96, but Delhi has a winter weather crisis. Smog is choking the city and its ten million people as slum dwellers burn old tyres and scrap to keep warm in temperatures plunging to 5°C.

That is cold enough to kill people too poor to protect themselves, and Delhi at night is a city of people huddled round open fires in the street. Flights in and out of the capital are in chaos because visibility is so low. Each day the smog grows worse, filling the hospitals with people complaining of respiratory problems.

The eye-watering smog is worst in the early morning, when visibility is down to 50 yards. There is not a breath of wind to blow it away and it is noon before the air clears a little. Morning rush-hour traffic moves inch by inch through a gloom of swirling smoke in what should be daylight. It is one of the worst periods of smog on record.

Japanese leader calls for fewer American troops

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S new Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said yesterday that the United States and Japan should work to reduce American military presence in Okinawa, the country's southernmost island, and base for most of the 60,000 or so US troops stationed in Japan.

Mr Hashimoto, who is known for his nationalist views and tough approach to trade negotiations with America, adopted a more conciliatory tone at a press conference marking his accession to the premiership: he described the relationship with Washington as "the most important" of Japan's bilateral ties.

"Needless to say, the Japan-US security treaty remains basic to the relationship," he said. Mr Hashimoto made the remarks during his first press conference since becoming Prime Minister on Thursday. Public opposition to American military bases has intensified since September, when three servicemen were accused of raping a Japanese schoolgirl. Mr Hashimoto said he hoped the United States would "understand the pain and suffering" of Okinawan citizens. He said he had conveyed his view on reducing

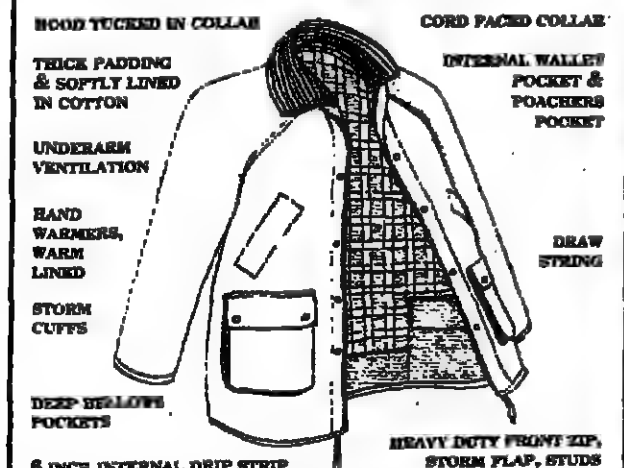
the American military presence to President Clinton in their first telephone conversation since he took office. The American President is due to visit Japan in April for a meeting that is likely to focus on the issues of trade and security relations.

Mr Hashimoto, in his role as International Trade and Industry Minister in the previous administration, rejected all Washington's demands that Japan should commit itself to specific import targets. With a general election for the lower house of the Diet due this summer, Mr Hashimoto is likely to avoid making any big concessions on trade.

Japan's economic recovery would be the top priority of his administration, Mr Hashimoto said, adding: "The systems which have sustained Japan for the past 50 years now need to be drastically changed... this year will be an inaugural year for changing Japan's main structures." Although Mr Hashimoto's political credo set out in his book, *A Vision of Japan*, suggests only modest changes to the trading status quo, he is in favour of greater public spending on the national infrastructure.

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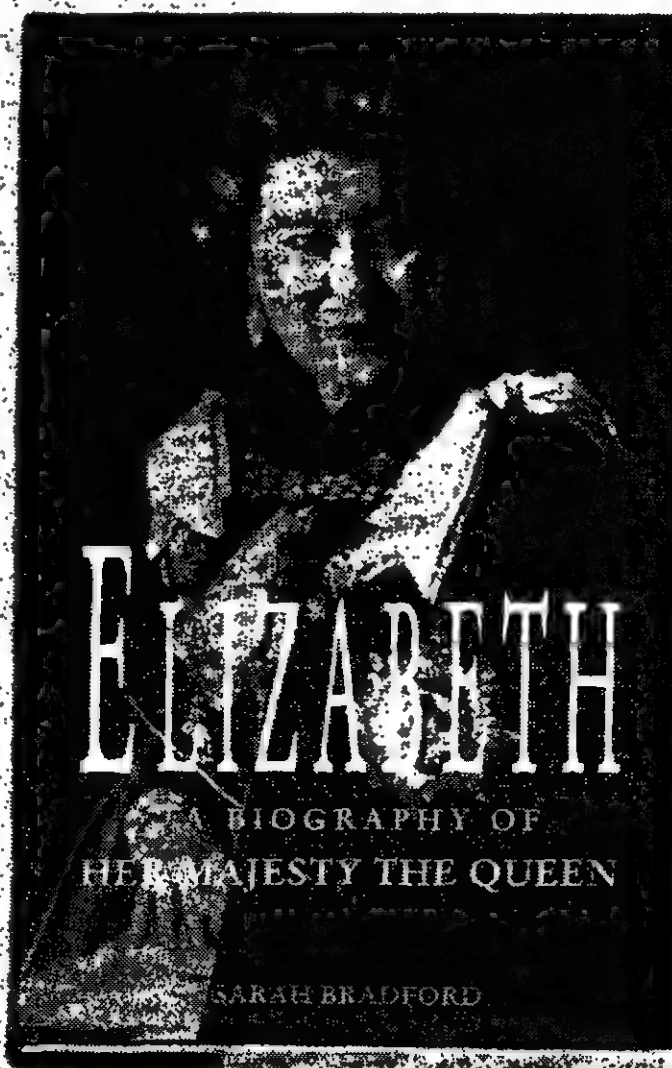
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LONDON

O

Police in gear with car mafia

A FRIEND was checking in for work at a Warsaw hospital when he glanced out of the window and saw a couple of young men stealing his new, uninsured Japanese car.

Two distraught days later, he received a telephone call from the crooks he was offered the opportunity to buy back his Nissan for \$5,000 (£3,200), a special offer made in the post-Christmas spirit. The money was exchanged for the car key in the centre of the capital in an elaborate ritual.

The involvement of the police with the car mafia, whose business is stealing vehicles in Germany and selling them in Ukraine, is unproved but obvious. A disillusioned officer has left the service and set up a detective agency that guarantees a quick, if pricey, return of the missing car.

Death knell for 'KGB Prime Minister' in crime-ridden Poland



Józef Oleksy surrounded by his party members during the vote last year that cleared the way for him to become Prime Minister of Poland

Moscow spies' shadow blackens the Red baron

JOZEF OLEKSY, the Polish Prime Minister, lives in a housing estate dubbed the Bay of Red Pigs because of its dense concentration of former Communists enjoying the bourgeois life.

For the most part, they live modestly. Mr Oleksy's flat has two bedrooms; President Kwasniewski, though rather richer than the Prime Minister, has an equally restrained lifestyle. Only Jerzy Urban, the provocative publisher and erstwhile spokesman of the previous martial law regime — flaunts his new wealth. He runs a Jaguar, wears specially expanded Armani jeans, and inhabits Californian-style mansions.

One of Mr Oleksy's neighbours used to be Volodya Alganov. Built like a burly second-row forward, he was a cheerful backslapping com-

mercial attaché in the Russian Embassy. He was also a KGB officer. Long before Mr Oleksy became Prime Minister, the Russian used to pop round to his neighbour, knock back vodka, exchange risqué jokes and talk politics.

Perhaps the most suspicious part of the whole story is the claim that Mr Oleksy, whose code-name was supposed to have been Olin, played tennis with his KGB contact. Mr Oleksy, it is fair to say, does not have an athletic frame. Asked about the Prime Minister's secret sporting habits, a spokeswoman said he liked "to go for walks". The KGB works

WARSAW FILE

by ROGER BOYES



in mysterious ways — but would it set up such an improbable rendezvous with the Prime Minister?

Mr Alganov (reportedly a colonel in the Russian secret service) denies that he ran the Prime Minister. "We were just good friends," he told reporters in Moscow recently.

For Poles, that was the political death knell for Mr Oleksy. In a few days, the military prosecutor will announce whether there is enough evidence to prosecute the Prime Minister as a KGB agent. Whatever is decided — and the prosecutor has a pile of tapped telephone transcripts and a covertly filmed videotape — Mr Oleksy's career is unlikely to flourish.

Nobody is ready to believe you can be "just good friends" with the KGB. The Prime Minister with his brittle humour and blurred features — as if he were wearing a stocking

mask — will soon have to step aside. Conspiracy theories abound. One line is as follows: Moscow has briefed its

secret services to do everything possible to hinder Poland's entry to Nato. Information about Mr Oleksy was leaked by the Russians to the Polish security service a lack of the secret police loyal to former President Walesa fell for the ruse and pushed the evidence into the public domain.

The result: ammunition for those in the West who are having doubts about the eastward expansion of the Nato alliance. This is one of the more straightforward explanations. All versions, however, labyrinthine, draw strength from a solid factual observation: the Russian security services (both the successor to the KGB and the GRU military espionage agency) have become very active in Poland and throughout Central Europe.

The former KGB resident in Warsaw, General Vitali Pevlov, has been reminiscing on Polish radio about the good old days of the early 1980s when he could stroll through the corridors of the Interior Ministry in Warsaw.

In those days, there was not much need to spy on the Poles; eager Communists would bring them the latest tidbits. Even so, there was a network of agents tucked away in the commercial section, working for Aeroflot or as foreign correspondents.

Reagan era, the American services were in a privileged position when the 1989 revolutions threw the Communists out of power.

The other day a British reporter privately asked the Deputy Defence Minister what he made of the accusations of espionage levelled against Mr Oleksy.

He said he was doubtful about the evidence. "But you can never be sure. I have encountered three agents in my time in the army, and they all worked for the CIA."



Urban: now a wealthy Jaguar and Armani man

Bowing to convention

THE Queen will visit Poland at the end of March and Polish aristocrats are making discreet inquiries about invitations to the gala bash. But it is President Kwasniewski who seems to be the most unsettled. How should a former Communist greet the monarch? When the Princess Royal visited Warsaw some years ago, Mr Kwasniewski — invited to a reception at the Royal Castle as a member of the Polish Olympic Committee — could be heard whispering to colleagues: "Should I curtsey?"

Socialist is set to win presidency in close Lisbon vote

FROM REUTER IN LISBON

JORGE SAMPAIO, the Socialist former Mayor of Lisbon, looks set to complete a remarkable electoral double for his party and win tomorrow's presidential vote in Portugal, despite a late surge by Anibal Cavaco Silva, his conservative rival.

Although polls show Senhor Cavaco Silva, the former Prime Minister, closing fast, political analysts say that Senhor Sampaio should still have the edge.

"Save a miracle, it will not be enough to win," the weekly news magazine *Visão* wrote of Senhor Cavaco Silva's late charge. Victory for Senhor Sampaio would be the second big boost for the Socialists in a few months; the party ended a decade in opposition when Antonio Guterres became Prime Minister after winning the October 1 elections.

A Socialist win would also mark the first time since democracy came to Portugal with the 1974 revolution, which toppled a right-wing dictatorship, that the country's voters had chosen a President and Prime Minister from the same party.

This possible concentration of power has been one of the key themes of Senhor Cavaco Silva's campaign. "You cannot put all the weight on the same side or the boat will sink," he told a rally recently.

Although the Portuguese President has a largely ceremonial role, he can veto

legislation and, like the President of crisis-ridden Italy, his power to dissolve parliament can make him a key figure during political upheaval.

With the ruling Socialists just short of an overall parliamentary majority, the next President could well be called on to act as political arbiter during the four-year term of the present legislature.

Senhor Cavaco Silva, who governed Portugal for ten years until the elections three months ago, has made much of his experience and international connections, contrasting them with his opponent's lack of any prolonged period in government.

With Portugal facing some tough years if it is to get in shape for the European Union's ambitious plans to wed its economies in monetary union, Senhor Cavaco Silva says he is best placed to offer advice and counsel.

Last night the Socialist Government was dealt an embarrassing blow, two days before the elections to choose a successor to President Soares, when a minister offered to resign over allegations of tax evasion.

Murteira Nabo, the Public Works Minister, issued a statement saying that he had offered his resignation to Senhor Guterres after a report in the *Independente* weekly accused him of avoiding tax on a house purchase.

The minister, who was appointed only two weeks ago, admitted that the report "had a basis in fact" and said he had asked Senhor Guterres to relieve him of his post to avoid "affecting the image of the Government".

The newspaper said that Senhor Nabo, a former senior official with Portugal Telecom, had bought a house for 42 million escudos (£181,000) in 1992 but declared its value at only 33 million escudos.

Under Portuguese law, housebuyers should pay tax on the value of any property bought. Tax evasion is believed to be chronic and avoiding duty on house deals is one of the most common forms.



Cavaco Silva: making much of his experience

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OPINION

Will our diet of top-class theatre suffer as a result of government intolerance?



VISUAL ART

Brave faces among the dealers at next week's London Contemporary Art Fair may hide a widespread unease

THE TIMES
ARTS

RISING STAR

Setting the scene: at 26, stage designer Angela Davies already has a memorable style



POP

Spicy from their first note to last: G. Love & Special Sauce wow the Electric Ballroom

What a satisfying week this has been for those dreary people who subscribe to the "don't put your daughter on the stage" Mrs Worthington school of dour pragmatism. First, a lurid film called *Showgirls* confirms all they ever suspected about how unscrupulous producers degrade young actresses. And the fact that *Showgirls* comes not from some backstreet porn merchant but from mainstream Hollywood only intensifies the prejudice — so cunningly exploited by Senator Bob Dole last year — that the core values of showbiz are rotten from top to bottom.

Then comes irrefutable evidence that a thespian life is not only likely to be immoral, but also jolly insecure as well. This week Britain's grandest employer of stage talent, the Royal Opera House, lurched closer to the kind of nemesis usually experienced in the more depressing sort of Greek tragedy. Perhaps the ROH management should hire Dame Diana

Rigg to wail in a black shawl; at least they could claim to be reviving something bleak by Euripides, and pass round a collection plate.

Covent Garden redundancies, it is said, may run to 100, 200... or even to the entire Royal Opera and Ballet, depending on how crass you believe the ROH's forward-planning (planning?) to have been. At the moment, if I understand the matter correctly — and if I do, I may be uniquely gifted — the ROH is committed to starting a £200 million redevelopment next year with only a fraction of the requisite cash in the bank and not a clue about where to put its performers.

If this folly were perpetrated in any other field of endeavour they would call it madness, or at least Eurotunnel. "And that's how you manage your flagship arts com-

pany?" a visiting American colleague exclaimed last week. "God help the tugs and trawlers."

Of course, Americans are not the best people to lecture others about the importance of supporting high-brow culture, as I sharply reminded the impertinent fellow. But he had a point. Britain produces more superb performers per head of population than any other country. Abroad, they land the plum roles and are fêted for it. Yet at home we make their lives miserable by spectacularly mismanaging, or suppressing their talents. Indeed, we often appear to endorse an official intolerance of anybody pursuing an arts career.

Consider the battle now going on between Equity, the actors' union, and the Department of Employment over unemployment benefit — or "jobseekers" allow-



RICHARD MORRISON

ance" as we must soon call it, on the grounds that there are no unemployed people in Mr Major's Britain. I am no fan of Equity. One large reason why theatres such as Covent Garden are heading to-

wards disaster is that Equity, with the other entertainment unions, has shackled them to working practices that were old when Garrick was young. Nevertheless, this time the union is right.

From October, officials will direct people who have been out of work for a time to retrain for a new trade. Equity argues that acting work is bound to be patchy, and that attending retraining courses would mean actors forfeiting the chance to audition for parts. The Department of Employment reports that performers cannot expect to "hold out indefinitely" for work in their profession.

On the surface, this sounds reasonable. Equity has 43,000 members, 80 per cent of whom are currently out of work. That seems like a vast reservoir of stagnant human resource, idling life away,

dreaming of the big break that will never come. In fact, most will be drifting in and out of acting work much of the time. Without this depth of talent from which to choose, our stage productions and TV dramas would be far less good.

This is not an argument to deploy on a grey morning in a dole office. But a government minister with an ounce of feeling for the arts should be able to grasp it. Actors are not malingers. And the one advantage of the closed-shop operated by Equity is that it is not easy for malingers to pass themselves off as actors. So this is not some outrageous scam waiting to be exposed with a cry of "gotcha" by a rabid politician on the make.

Sympathy, not suspicion, should be the official response to the

resting luvvie. And there is one easy solution to thespian unemployment: reopen some of the theatres that have gone "dark". But that, of course, would be far too expensive for a nation that spent £100 million on one week's lottery tickets.

So, don't put your daughter on the stage, Mrs Worthington? I would never say that. Each time I see a show at one of our great conservatoires I come away exhilarated by the talent on display. Every year we produce nascent stars who — given half a chance — will dazzle, move and amuse us to the ends of our days. We must give them that half-chance.

We mustn't demean them with putrid dress like *Showgirls*. We mustn't disillusion them by concocting ghastly debacles like the Opera House redevelopment. We mustn't humiliate them in dole queues by treating them like anti-social parasites. A great talent can enrich everybody's lives. Why does it get smothered so often?

Why do we stifle so much talent?

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

ANGELA DAVIES

Profession: Designer

Age: 26

What has she done? Davies, graduating from Nottingham Poly, won the Linbury Prize in 1991. She worked in Glasgow to avoid London's assistant designer ladder, then came south and was awarded *Time Out's* Best Designer trophy in 1994 for her Victorian-inspired *The Great Highway* at the Gate, all ropes and pulleys, and her lesbian-box desert at the Bush framing Naomi Wallace's *In The Heart Of America*.

Most recently, Davies converted the Gate into a barn rife with trapdoors for *The Ballad Of Wolves*, continuing the rough wood style of *The Boat Plays* with artistic director David Farr.

Her roots: The daughter of a welder, Davies retains a soft Rhondda Valley accent. "At 18," she remembers, "I saw a book on theatre design. I knew that was it. I phoned the RSC the next day, asking them what to do. They showed me round their studios and gave me free tickets."

Coming soon: Davies is currently creating a metal set "like an oven or cooling box" for ATC's touring production of *Miss Julia*.

Dreams: "I've done site-specific productions in a cave, Glasgow's fruit market and an old hospital, and hope to do more. Eventually I'd like to found a co-designing company. I am desperate to try a proscenium arch and perhaps work more in film."

Any disasters? "All kinds. On *The Great Highway*, a huge frame almost killed the set-builder. He had one wooden leg already. It just missed his other. Then I was up at night painting the set, thought I was filling the spray-gun but was pouring a bucket of paint into my lap. I finished the set in my knickers and went home in a towel."

On herself: My work is my vice. I have a passion for it.

KATE BASSETT



Art 96 may be a good introduction to British art, but the 'corner-shops' must stay, says Charles Hall

Going for a fair overview

A lot of people feel that if they walk in off the street into a gallery in Cork Street, they are going to be insulted or ignored, says Guy Pepploe of the Scottish Gallery. At a fair such as Art 96, which opens this week at the Business Design Centre in Islington, "you can see the managing director, and ask all the silly questions you can think of."

Not that the managing director will mind. Thanks to the recession, the days when galleries could afford to be stand-offish are long gone — even Cork Street now has an "open weekend", luring in the punters with free drinks and bargain prices.

But if commercial galleries are working harder than ever to reach new audiences, it reflects rather more than greed or desperation. The British art world is as divided as ever over what constitutes good art (or even art at all), but almost everyone feels that their particular version of the One True Tradition is more vigorous than it has been for

years, and that it is British (or British-based) artists who are leading the way.

The only people apparently oblivious of this are the great British public. "We are," as the dealer Karsten Schubert puts it, "the centre of the art world, but not of the art market."

Art 96 is, or ought to be, at the heart of efforts to rectify the situation. The art fair, the only specialist contemporary fair in London, brings together more than 80 dealers, showing at least 10,000 works of art. It is the year's best chance to get an overview of what is going on in British art.

And the organisers can claim some notable coups. As well as attracting the venerable likes of the Fine Art Society, Art 96 has also won the support of the White Cube and Karsten Schubert galleries — two of the dealerships credited with bringing the cutting edge of the British avant-garde to its current international prominence.

But these successes are balanced by absences. This year, for example, there will be no Anselm Kiefer, no Francis Graham-Dixon (defecting after seven years), and worst of all, no Leslie Waddington.

Waddington's absence must be particularly galling. He is, after all, the country's most prestigious and prosperous dealer. He is also the man who, only two years ago, was sounding the death-knell of the commercial gallery system. Just as galleries in clusters or communities have always fared better than those working in isolation, Waddington reasoned, so art fairs, which can attract the best galleries in the world, showing the best of their stock, must prove more viable still.

And as rents and running costs rose, and the clientele became more and more international, so it made sense for dealers to close their permanent exhibition spaces and commute from one glamorous art fair to another. "A whole system of corner shops is dying," he said, suiting actions to his words by closing two of his five galleries in Cork Street. And now he isn't here.

But that remark was made



British art, says Karsten Schubert, "is at the centre of the art world, but not the art market". Art 96 hopes to rectify this

in the context of a proposed expansion — Waddington plans to move his operations, in whole or part, to Paris, a move which will coincide, he says, with a similar move by the major auction houses.

Those defections can only accentuate his principal complaint: that London has little to recommend it to the kind of collectors he needs to attract. Our museums and galleries rarely match the calibre of exhibitions routinely staged in Paris and New York, while contemporary art attracts far higher rates of VAT here than it does in competing European capitals.

This drift away from London, if it continues, can only reinforce the timidity of British collectors, the bane of dealers of every aesthetic persuasion. Even Gillian Jason, of the Rhodes Jason Gallery, whose support for a figurative and expressionist school fits comfortably with domestic tastes, observes that "a European client sees something, wants it and buys it: the English always seem to suspect that they might be making fools of themselves".

Many dealers still argue that the London art fair could and should take its place in a co-ordinated strategy to put London's galleries back on the international map: "We need the main London dealers — all of them — to be here," Karsten Schubert says, "and we need to tie the fair into the programme at the salerooms. Unfortunately, people find it

hard to sustain an effort over several years without seeing any results."

Anneli Juda, a long-time supporter of the fair, with an international reputation for her support of the constructivist tradition of abstraction, is a case in point. She, like many of her fellow absentees, is looking instead to fairs in Basel, Paris, Chicago and Madrid, which attract a larger, more truly international audience — and do so, crucially, while charging galleries less for the privilege of participating.

But if Art 96 is unusually expensive to take part in, it is also unusual in not receiving public funding. This reduces what ought to be an event of international cultural (and financial) significance to a worthy provincial get-together: there are no major foreign dealers at the fair this year.

And it's not just that high costs tempt many dealers to stay away: the financial exposure is such that those who do come have to play safe in what they choose to show. As Guy Pepploe says: "Our main programme is one-person shows. But you have to take a group show to a fair to minimise the risks — so we will be taking piles of catalogues and talking non-stop, so that people know it isn't just a rag-bag."

Art 96 is an invaluable introduction to the art world, but it is only that. Which is why, as Karsten Schubert says, the "corner shops" will never die.

Art 96 is at the Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1, (0171-359 3535), January 17-24

A whiter shade of blues

WHAT'S a young white man supposed to make of the blues in the 1990s? There are those who seek to revive and revere it, but Garrett Dutton from Philadelphia has chosen instead to reinvent it (and himself) according to his own idiosyncratic specifications. Having met an upright bass player, Jimmy Prescott, and a drummer, Jeffrey Clemens, in Boston, he changed his name — and G. Love & Special Sauce were born in 1993.

A tall, lean figure in a brown suit, armed with an ancient electric guitar and harmonica, Love spent most of the time at the Electric Ballroom perched on a stool. An extraordinarily lackadaisical player and singer, he had a peculiar way with a lyric, often half-speaking,

POP

G. Love & Special Sauce
Electric Ballroom

neo-rap style. In between chopping off sketchy riffs and nearly-formed jazz chords, his hands kept time in the air.

Prescott and Clemens were no less distinctive, and together the three produced a ramshackle, heavily syncopated sound that was strangely appealing. They played surprisingly little of their estimable second album *Coast To Coast Motel*, favouring numbers from their self-titled 1994 de-

but instead. Their improvisations tended to meander, and while scrupulous attention was paid at all times to the exact state of the groove, the show was rather left to take care of itself.

But their zest for the music was contagious, as was Love's enthusiasm for the subject of the women in his life. In case we hadn't got the message from songs such as *Sweet Sugar Mama*, he spelt out his preferences ("I like 'em young, long, lean and mean") and dedicated several songs to the "ladies in the house".

Not a gig that would have found favour with blues purists, but enjoyable because they dared to be different.

DAVID SINCLAIR

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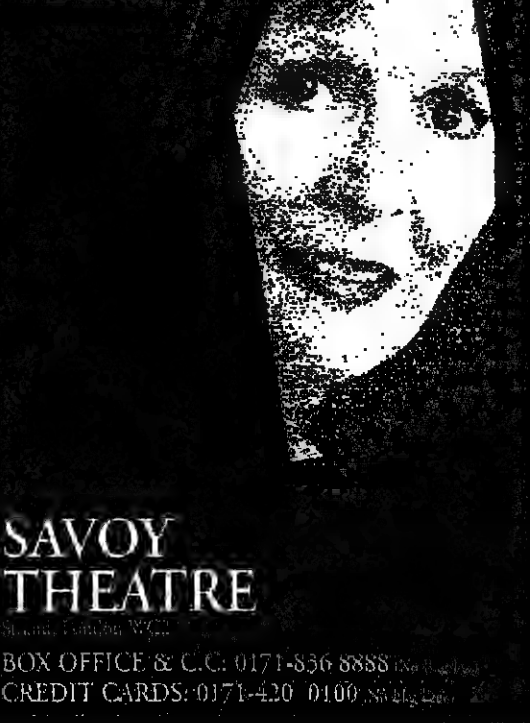
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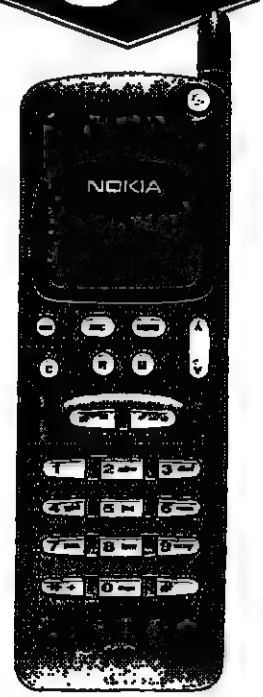
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HERITAGE

Furore in Scotland over a millennium plan to demolish Perth's listed City Hall



BASE NOTES

The smart money is on Nicolas Cage to pick up the Best Actor Oscar for Leaving Las Vegas

THE TIMES ARTS



BASE NOTES

... while British singer Seal looks set to sweep the Grammy Awards with Kiss for a Rose



ON MONDAY

Cry for the beloved country: Hugh Masekela laments a new cultural malaise in South Africa

Magnus Linklater on the row over plans to demolish a listed landmark in Scotland's fair city of Perth

An eyesore – or a sight for sore eyes?

The Millennium Commission has faced some tricky choices in its brief life, but one of the toughest lies ahead of it. Within the next month it will have to decide whether to support a plan that will involve the destruction of a listed building in the heart of a beautiful city, a demolition that has been condemned as "civic vandalism."

The project is all the more surprising because it emerges from one of the most cautious and conservative cities in Britain. Perth – traditionally described as "The Fair City" – has tended to keep its hands off old buildings, ever since the traumatic day in May, 1999, when John Knox launched the Scottish Reformation from the pulpit of St John's Kirk in Perth, and then proceeded to destroy most of the city's other fine churches. But now the district council has taken a boldly creative decision and announced plans to pull down its City Hall, a formidable structure built 80 years ago in Victorian neoclassical style, to make way for an open square. At the same time, if the commission backs the scheme, a new building on a nearby site would be thrown open to architectural competition.

The plan has caused a furore. A petition launched by those in opposition to the scheme has collected more than 2,000 signatures, and conservationists, who have described the proposals as "civic vandalism", will lobby a council meeting on January 24 that will take the final decision on whether to proceed.

But the more council members have explored the idea, the more they like it, and most of those who have listened to the details have become convinced that, far from being an act of wanton pillage, it could elevate a provincial city on to an international stage.

Page and Park, the Glasgow architectural consultant, has produced plans under the beguiling title of "Put a new heart in Perth", which would see the City Hall disappearing to create a large and open civic space in front of St John's Kirk – a genuinely historic building which has been hidden away ever since the hall was built.

The firm's senior architect, David Page, has produced drawings for a commercial

complex next to the square, known as the "Golden Tower" plan because of the high structure with which he has surmounted it. He has also designed a new City Hall on the so-called Horse Cross site on the other side of the High Street to replace the old one.

But this is just a working model. If the Millennium Commission comes up with the funds, the idea is to open the whole project up to international competition.

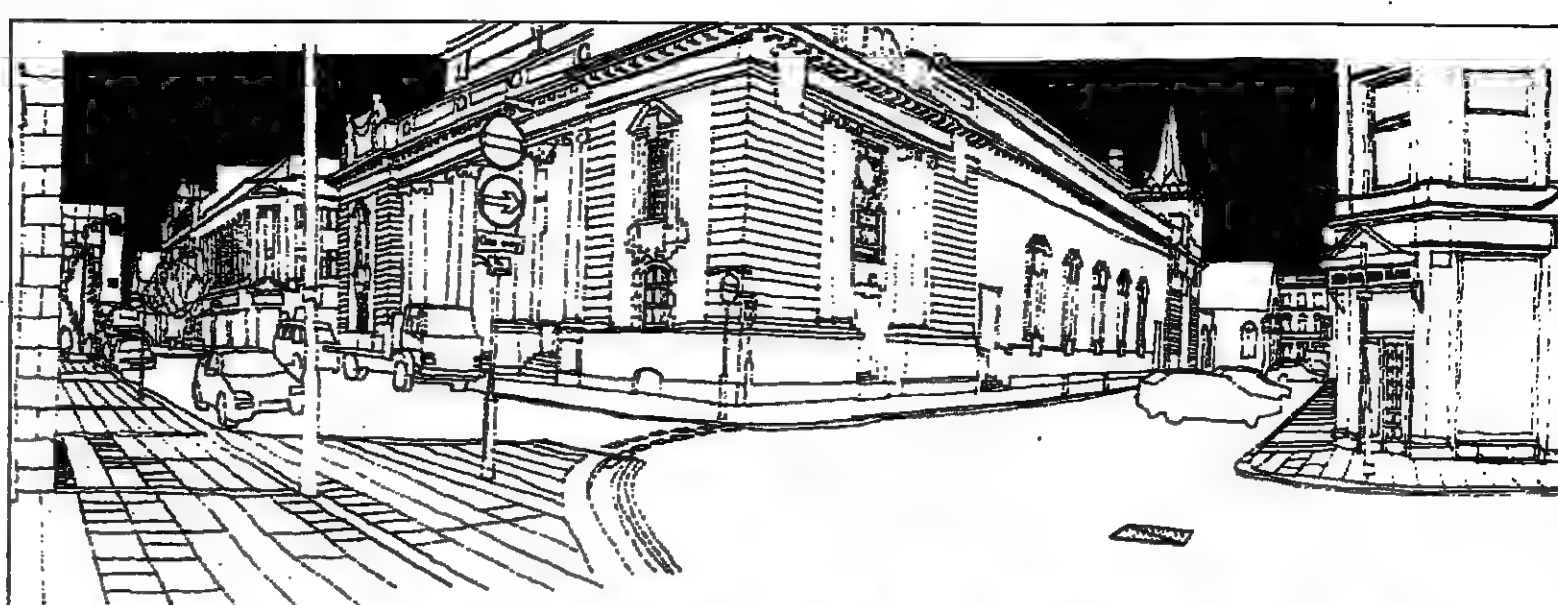
Harry Robertson, the chief executive of Perth and Kinross District Council, sees it as a "once in a lifetime" opportunity "to provide an attraction of national if not international proportions, and give Perth a city centre feature which it sadly lacks at the moment". Historic Scotland, which would have to give its approval to the demolition of a listed building, has expressed cautious interest. The Earl of Perth, who lives near by, and who is an honorary

Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, believes it is a chance "to propel Perth into the 21st century".

But perhaps the most telling point in the plan's favour has been the detailed public consultation carried out by the council, involving group presentations to local people, and the distribution of 28,000 copies of a special supplement detailing the implications of the scheme.

Although older residents were dismayed by the prospect of losing a building to which they had sentimental attachments, younger citizens described it variously as unsightly, boring and irrelevant. It is neither large enough for a conference hall, modern enough to cater for exhibitions, nor well enough equipped to stage arts events. Estimates of what it would cost to be refurbished vary from £1 million to £5 million. "Without being elitist," says Ken Dunn, assistant director of architectural services, "whenever intelligent people have listened to the arguments, they have been won over." The old hall, he added, "has outlived its reasonable usefulness".

That does not mean the fight is over. Dennis Gray, a prominent Perth businessman, is waging an energetic campaign to stop the plan. "We cannot



Now you see it, now you see something better? An artist's representation of Perth City Hall as it is now (top), and of how the city might look if the hall were razed and the area given over to a large, open civic space in front of historic St John's Kirk, hidden away ever since the hall was built

Cage is favourite for Oscar

THE unlikely front-runner for this year's Best Actor Oscar has emerged as Nicolas Cage, who made virtually a clean sweep of American critics' awards for his performance in *Leaving Las Vegas*. British director Mike Figgis's film (released here next Friday) won all four top awards – Best Picture, Actor, Actress (Elizabeth Shue) and Director – from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and has been cited at least once by other major critics' organisations. Cage's arrival on the scene may mean that several Britons who had been assumed as automatic choices for a nomination – Jonathan Pryce (*Carrington*) and Ian McKellen (*Richard III*) – fail

BASE NOTES

to win a place in the final five. Cage faces tough competition from Morgan Freeman (*Seven*), John Travolta (*Get Shorty*), Tom Hanks (*Apollo 13*) and Sean Penn (*Dead Man Walking*).

BRIT nominees Seal, Annie Lennox and P.J. Harvey have additional reason to celebrate. Each has been recognised by the American record industry's equivalent awards, the Grammys. Seal's *Kiss for a Rose* leads the UK pack, with nominations for Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best Male Pop Vocal Performance. Lennox and Harvey have two nominations each, while Elton John and Sting receive one each. Meanwhile Sir George Solti, the top Grammy-winner of all time with 30 statuettes, will be given a Lifetime Achievement award at next month's ceremony.

RSC actor Iain Glen has been chosen to follow in the footsteps of Gérard Depardieu and Richard Gere – as star in a new version of the story of Martin Guerre. Glen will take the role of Arnaud in the new Boubli-Schönberg musical *Martin Guerre*, which opens in the West End on June 18. Glen came to public attention with his first starring role in the television series *The Fear*. Depardieu starred in the 1981 French film, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Gere in the Hollywood remake *Sommersby*. Boubli and Schönberg already have two mega-musicals on in London: *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*.

ADD Big to the seemingly endless spate of stage musicals spawned by films, joining *Sunset Boulevard*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Victor/Victoria*, among many others. Adapted from the 1988 comedy that brought Tom Hanks his first Oscar nomination, the show will open on Broadway on April 25. Britain's Mike Ockrent (*Crazy for You*) directs, with choreography by his wife, Susan Stroman. John Weidman is writing the book; music is by the Oscar-winning team of David Shire and Richard Maltby Jr. Daniel Jenkins will inherit Hanks's role as the New Jersey little-league player who is transformed into a 35-year-old man.

BRITPOP may have won all the headlines, but middle-of-

the-road triumphed on last year's UK singles charts. The final tally of 1995 sales finds Robson & Jerome at No 1 (*Unchained Melody/White Cliffs Of Dover*) and No 3 (*I Believe/Up on the Roof*), with Coolio's *Gangsta's Paradise* sandwiched between them. Artists also featuring in the cumulative Top 10 are, from 4 to 10, Take That (*Back For Good*), Celine Dion (*Think Twice*), Michael Jackson (*Earth Song* and, at No 8, *You Are Not Alone*), Simply Red (*Fairground*), Everything But

the Girl (*Missing*) and, finally, Oasis (*Wonderwall*).

THE weather has been blamed for the cancellation of the most eagerly awaited theatre event in Glasgow this spring. Circle in the Square Theatre Company, from New York, was due to perform Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer* at the Tramway in February, but has pulled out because snow apparently makes it impossible to transport its set from storage in Connecticut.

HILARY FINCH

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Bereaved but recognised: Mitterrand's illegitimate daughter Mazarine Pingeot and her mother

[illegible]



A GREEDY BIRD

EMU is devouring jobs, growth and harmony in Europe

John Major is isolated in Europe in one area where isolation is unquestionably a badge of honour. He is the only political leader of a major Western European country able, with any semblance of honesty, to predict that people's disposable incomes will rise this year and that unemployment will continue on its downward path.

Across continental Western Europe, countries are being dragged into a deflationary, job-destroying spiral — and the public knows it. A survey out this week from the European Commission shows that 40 per cent of people expect their economies to deteriorate this year, with the figure rising to 60 per cent in France. Even more, 44 per cent, expect unemployment, which averages 10.6 per cent today, to rise further.

This is a recession they accurately relate to the relentless pursuit by their leaders of the Maastricht targets for European monetary union — targets which not even Germany, whose Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, thunders that they must be made still more watertight than they already are, managed to meet last year. The depth and duration of this recession will depend on when politicians face up publicly to the reality that to press purlindly onward with EMU in 1999 will prove damaging not only to the health of their parties, but to the bonds of trust that cement democracy.

All recessions create political pain: but it is far worse when the cause is the existence of a date, arbitrarily fixed four years ago, which by definition takes no account of national circumstances. No doubt France has solid domestic reasons to cut its budget deficit and curb its welfare bill: but the obsessive pursuit of EMU is hindering, not helping, these reforms. Low growth — and it could be less than 1.5 per cent this year — will force the deficit back up. If the French government then tightens fiscal policy further to meet the Maastricht 3 per cent deficit ceiling by 1997, growth will shrink further: and so on down.

Germany is in the doldrums too, with the economy actually shrinking. Lower than expected growth last year was a key reason for its own embarrassing budget deficit of 3.6 per cent for 1995, and few independent economists agree with the Bundesbank's

optimistic prediction of a return this year to 2 per cent growth. At almost four million, German unemployment is now at its worst since December 1945, and the pain will not be confined to Germany: as the continent's most powerful economy, it exports its bad news across the whole of Europe.

Helmut Kohl still sees no red lights, and has succeeded for now in fitting the blinkers back over Jacques Chirac's nervously twitching pupils. But around them, tempers are fraying and eyes are straying towards the emergency exits. In France, the Centre-Right is quietly starting to steal M Chirac's discarded clothes to argue for, well, a little more suppleness in the timing of EMU.

In Germany, Herr Waigel is busy inventing escape routes of a different kind. In November, he insisted that after EMU, members who ran up excessive deficits should be heavily fined. This amounts to kicking a country when it is down — a scheme calculated to fire bitter resentment against a "German Europe". Now he has gone one better: miscreants, he says, should be kicked out of the club. Since Maastricht contains no such provision, this is legally tricky: Herr Waigel airily cites the "accepted principles of international law" but does not say who would have the power to invoke them. What is more, it is political heresy against his master: if there is one thing on which Herr Kohl insists above all others, it is that EMU, as a stepping stone to political integration, will be absolutely irreversible.

If EMU is an agreement between sovereign states, this cannot be true: all treaties can be revoked. The point Herr Kohl is making, of course, is that EMU will create federation. This is not just personal conviction, but political calculation. He knows that two out of three Germans want to hold on to the mark, so he can sell EMU only as an essential part of his grand political design for united Europe. In reality, the pursuit of EMU is disuniting Europe. Herr Kohl is probably the only continental politician whose position would actually be strengthened if he were to admit the political necessity of postponing Europe's date with an uncertain monetary destiny. Unhappily for Europe, he shows no sign of seeing sense.

UP AND AWAY

With *The Times* to the great world balloon race

Like Webster's dictionary, romantics of the world are Morocco-bound. And that pun from the cheerful old Road film is apt, because the race to be first to fly around the world by balloon has much of the romance and adventure of that early Technicolor, singing-and-dancing cinema. When they get round to making the film, the director will have at his disposal ready-made titles as evocative as *Around the World in Twenty Days* or *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Balloons*.

Even in the subtext, life is imitating Jules Verne and Haggard riding the ripping yarns. After weeks of waiting, the winds have at last changed, so that a Dutch team aims to launch its attempt from Nijmegen on Monday, a little before Richard Branson and his crew are hoping to lift off from Marrakesh. On Wednesday the American challenger flew into trouble over the Atlantic, and escaped an icy death by the skin of his capsule. The Moroccan Army in scarlet and turbans will provide exotic colour next week. The extras will include readers of British newspapers who have won competitions to launch this last great aviation challenge. And, of course, the gentleman from *The Times* will be in a following jet with orders to keep up as best as he can.

The Times was born in 1785 at the very beginning of the balloon age, in that year when hot-air balloons were taking off all over Europe. During the siege of Paris in 1870 we were microscopically reduced and flown into Paris by balloon: news and classified advertisements (in the circum-

stances, mostly deaths) were flown back out to us at Printing House Square.

The Montgolfier brothers launched man's imagination into the sky with their hot-air balloon and its crew of a rooster, a duck and a sheep. This airy symbolism inspired the Count of Provence to extemporise in windy French rhymes: "The English, that arrogant nation, claim the empire of the mer. But we French, a buoyant nation, are claiming mastery of the air."

But within a century lighter-than-air balloons were superseded by the power and flexibility of heavier-than-air craft, and by the disasters that engulfed airships such as the *R101* and the *Hindenburg*. It is a delightful paradox of aviation history that in this age of space travel and vapour trails that stitch up the skies faster than sound balloons are making their comeback.

For recreation they float silently looking down on the troubles of the world from a bird's-eye view. Safer gases and stronger technology are making balloons a cheap method of carrying heavy cargo. These modern balloons, with their helium compartments and pressurised capsules, are to the Montgolfiers' globe of canvas and paper as Hyperion to a sparrow. They fly at 240 mph, seven miles up, riding the jet streams of the Earth. Any day now, the racing balloonists will fly over 90 countries, some of them war-zones as inimical to overflying as the Sun was to Icarus. But in spite of their astonishing modern technology the balloonists are still fulfilling man's old dream, to win, to get there first, to circumnavigate the globe, to fly.

HOW IS THAT?

'Dickie' Bird is set to draw stumps

Umpire Harold Bird — "Dickie" to friends, players and aficionados in every cranny of the cricketing commonwealth — has announced that he will retire after his next Test match. Fittingly, the game will be played at Lord's, between England and India: two sides which still interpret cricket in a friendly-spirited language. The 22 players on that occasion, and the spectators at the ground, will doubtless pay him generous tribute. And Lord's itself may think up some affectionate honour: the "Dickie" Bird Tavern, perhaps? For this umpire, as much as the best practitioners of cricket's other arts, has made himself a very part of the game.

Mr Bird has been the umpire *par excellence* of the modern, televised era. The camera has, over 23 years and 65 Test matches, captured both his skill and his sense of humour. Just as his chuckles between overs are beamed into the nation's living rooms, so too is the slow-motion detail of his finely honed decisions.

Scarcely anyone groans or yowls or screams abuse when Mr Bird raises his right index finger: and players, too, in this acrimonious age of cricketers, seem always to take his judgments with docility. His fellow-umpires, whether English or foreign, hold him in the highest regard: in an interview with *The Times* last year,

S. Venkataraghavan, Mr Bird's heir-apparent as the world's best umpire, declared that "wearing the white coat together with Dickie is a source of great comfort".

Yet if Mr Bird's celebrity is due in part to television, his impending departure may have been caused by television as well. Unkind, carping articles have appeared in the press from time to time — especially in the last year — drawing attention to a few of those decisions which umpires-in-the-stands are apt to call "iffy".

Camera technology is now utterly remorseless. Commentators today speak with the frankness and irreverence that go with our age: decisions that were once described as "touch and go" are now denounced, nakedly, as "wrong". The margin of error that umpires have enjoyed — and should continue to do so — has all but vanished. Mr Bird is still an astonishingly good umpire, but television has shown that he too has his moments of fallibility: the criticism has rankled.

His departure will rob the game of a great showman, and a little of its rectitude. But it may free Mr Bird for some less taxing pursuits. For 30 years or more he has turned his back on marriage — being, as he puts it, "married to cricket". Perhaps there will be time, at last, for a Mrs Bird. How's that?

Media distortion of serious debate

From Sir John Nott

Sir, It is damaging to serious debate about the future of this country when former politicians, particularly former leaders of the Conservative Party, are inhibited from making public contributions to policy by the media frenzy that always accompanies anything they say.

I attended Lady Thatcher's speech last night mainly in respect for Keith Joseph's memory, not as a member of the Thatcher "diaspora" (Matthew Parris's phrase). It was an interesting speech, delivered in a sober tone and was constructive throughout.

As a former member of the "One Nation" Dining Club whose members, incidentally, included Edward Heath and Enoch Powell, I was amused by the phrase "No Nation" Tories. To make a whole political drama out of it is an indication of current media hysteria.

Your leader was a relatively sensible commentary on her speech but your own journalists, including Peter Riddell ("Major left in no doubt about his 'wrong direction'"), as well as every other serious newspaper, and including the BBC, selectively quoted from it, apparently with the intention of damaging the Government and personal relationships between present and former politicians. All of this was spiced, of course, with further selected "rena-quotes" from the usual Tory backbenchers.

I was glad to see that you also published lengthy textual extracts from the speech, but I wish that the media would do more in its reporting to encourage intelligent debate about the great issues facing the country.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN NOTT,
32 Hampstead High Street, NW3,
January 12.

Stakeholder economy

From Mr Nicholas Bennett

Sir, If Tony Blair wishes to steal Conservative clothing ("Blair's big phrase", leading article, January 10) he must take the foundation garments and not just the jacket of an idea. From what one can discern of his concept of a "stakeholding society" it would appear that he is firmly wedded to old Labour's corporatist ideals. He has not grasped the fact that real public ownership is private ownership. It is choice and private ownership of wealth by individuals and their families which underpins a responsible, free society.

The purchase of shares in the former nationalised industries has given the public a stake and an influence in those companies which they never enjoyed when they were state-owned. It is the private ownership of housing which gives families a stake in the area in which they live. It is "communally-owned" housing which is abused and vandalised.

New Labour may claim that it believes in lower taxes but, like old Labour, its constant refrain is that the public services are "underfunded", presumably it intends to spend more. Only the Conservatives believe in lower taxes and less state interference because it enables as many as possible to look after themselves and their families. Every increase in taxes not only erodes that incentive but pushes a few more families from self-reliance to state dependence.

New Labour, which like all goods with such labels is merely a change in packaging, does not believe in real choice. Mr Blair may send his son eight miles across London to the grant-maintained school of his choice yet Labour (and Liberal Democrat) councils across the country fight tooth and nail any application by a school which wishes to opt out of their control.

The reality is that new Labour, with its desire for another tier of government in Wales and Scotland, its wish to embrace the regulations of the Social Chapter and its enthusiasm for an European single currency, is the same old Labour which the voters have rejected four times since 1979.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BENNETT
(Prospective Conservative
Parliamentary candidate for
Reading West),
7 Harewood Close, SE23,
January 10.

From Mr Matthew J. Rock

Sir, The word "stakeholder" has long been commonplace in business. Companies refer to stakeholders being their employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers and the wider community.

This has brought with it many problems: how do you satisfy your customers' desire for outstanding customer service when you are also satisfying your shareholders' demands for increased dividend payments? Redundancy programmes and customer service do not make comfortable bedmates.

And how do you balance a supplier's willingness to boost his order book with the environmentalist's pressure to cut down on the use of natural resources?

The use of the word "stakeholder" is a licence for conflicts of interest.

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW J. ROCK,
68 Dalgarro Gardens, W10,
January 11.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

End to torment of wondering what awaits us in Hell?

From Mr Robert Saxena

Sir, The Anglican Church is to be commended for at last coming out against the cruel hoax called "Hell", in which sinners are tortured forever by roasting and roasting in literal fire (report, January 11).

This doctrine has no basis whatever in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures but was incorporated into the Catholic religion from pagan sources, like so many other dogmas. Unfortunately the Reformation failed to get rid of it, and so it has persisted in the Protestant churches till now.

In the King James version the word Hell was rendered from the Hebrew *sheol*, which doesn't mean a place of eternal torment but the grave, or condition of death, pending a resurrection in "the last day". (See Marha's comment to Jesus at John xi, 24.)

The word "fire" is frequently used in the Bible as a symbol of total extinction (not torture), for fire destroys all living things. So when sinners are damned to "eternal fire" it only means they are condemned to eternal destruction, or brought to nothingness, as the Church's report rightly indicates.

God did not make Heaven and Hell. Genesis (i, 1) clearly says, "In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth", Hell, or the grave, or death, came only after man's original sin.

Yours faithfully,
R. G. SAXENA,
Bible Research Fellowship,
25 Edgell Street,
Kettering, Northamptonshire.

From Mr C. A. Hollands

Sir, God of course loves us all and would never consign any individual to torment. If, however, a person consistently rebels against God then the best God can do for him is simply to leave him alone.

The Church of England is therefore doing its members a disservice by tranquillising the issue. A respectable fear of Hell should be part of any Christian religion and is intrinsically healthy. It is a corrective against slackening one's faith to the point where it becomes too cosy and finally fades away into mere benign feelings for the world around us.

Yours sincerely,
C. A. HOLLANDS,
Bramcote,
14 Charlesford Avenue,
Kingswood,
Maidstone, Kent,
January 12.

From Mr Tim J. Smith

Sir, Tom Rees, a popular and successful evangelist in the South East in the Fifties and Sixties, used to say that "If Heaven is only made of streets of gold, I don't want to go there".

I have never taken that remark to mean that Heaven isn't a reality, but rather that language is a bit useless in trying to describe how brilliant it is to be in the presence of God, or how hellish to be outside.

Artists of the past tried to represent this imagery on canvas and the Church has been vilified ever since for

believing such cruel nonsense. But what words are sufficient to describe being with, or without, God? Even the thought of the latter is scary!

Sadly, we don't like to see or hear images of reality. But if God is the ultimate in justice as well as mercy, we must learn to live with the searing images of both.

Yours faithfully,
T. J. SMITH,
5 Raymond Avenue,
South Woodford, E18,
January 12.

From Mr Bernard Kaukas

Sir, Sartre's definition of Hell — "other people" — fits in well with his vacuous philosophy of existentialism, in that it has no meaning. A better Frenchman, Georges Bernanos, defined it more aptly: "Hell... is not to love any more".

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD KAUKAS,
Savage Club,
1 Whitehall Place, SW1,
January 11.

From Mrs Joan Woolard

Sir, Two thousand years ago the Jewish sage, Philo, wrote: "The real hell is the life of the wicked" (*De Congressu*, xi, 57).

Yours faithfully,
JOAN WOOLARD,
35 Eastgate,
Fleet Hargate, Lincolnshire,
January 12.

Terence Cuneo: recollections of the man and the mouse

From Mr Stanley J. Blenkinsop

Sir, The late Terence Cuneo would have smiled ruefully at the letters (January 8) about his mouse "trademark".

He once told me: "That damn mouse is the first thing people look for when they see my paintings — all too often they take no notice of the rest! I sometimes wish I could drop it." But it had become so identified with his work that he felt he could not — or people like your reader, Mr Haddow, would spend ages vainly looking for it.

Incidentally, it was in 1953, while doing a military picture at Caterick Camp, that Cuneo first adopted a mouse. In the garrison church there he was fascinated by the tiny mice cut into each of the pews.

Thus inspired, Cuneo incorporated a mouse into his Caterick painting and was so delighted by the initial reaction that he decided to do so with every picture in one guise or another.

Yours sincerely,
STANLEY J. BLENKINSOP,
22 Roan Court,
Macclesfield, Cheshire,
January 8.

From Mr David Thirby

Sir, Terry Cuneo began to be apprehensive about the power of mice. Some 15 years ago in his studio were two pictures on easels shortly to go to Jordan. One was of the King himself in full military uniform, the other was a large canvas of the Arab Legion storming a desert fort.

I was on my hands and knees, looking for the mouse, when Terry stiffened. I realised why, and said: "Has the mouse become bigger than the artist?" Terry acknowledged to me that he sometimes only painted in the mouse when the client requested it on collection, and told me that he knew that Conan Doyle grew to be antipathetic to Sherlock Holmes.

Faithfully,
DAVID THIRBY,
24 Eaglesfield, Hartford,
Northwich, Cheshire.

From Mr A. P. Willmer

Sir, Terence Cuneo was a friend of my father, and I remember him visiting us in Cambridge in the early 1960s, my father being a talented amateur artist. He would arrive in a burst of energy and good humour, with lots of time for us children. His paintings of

steam engines and railways, which he would bring to show us, were wonderful. So was the 1930s Rolls-Royce which he drove with great panache. The last time I saw him was I think in 1963, leaving in a burst of smoke and squealing tyres in the same Rolls-Royce, with large canvases strapped to the roof, no real thought attached to their safety (or potential value).

Yours faithfully,
A. P. WILLMER,
18 High Street, Buckden,
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire,
January 9.

From Mr G. A. G. Shephard

Sir, Terence Cuneo's hallmark was not always readily appreciated. In 1965 the then chairman of Lloyd's of London was appalled, at a preview of a work commissioned by the society, to see several mice in the painting.

He reprimanded Cuneo, saying that he was not being paid a large fee "to show Lloyd's as a rodent-infested establishment". The artist was eventually permitted to leave in one.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY SHEPHERD,
62 Park Road, Woking, Surrey,
January 8.

Fashion dilemma

From Ms Sarah Mulholland

Sir, The problem which faced the shopper next to me yesterday was whether her mobile telephone would fit in the evening bag being considered for purchase.

I am still debating whether this is a sign of progress, but have no doubt the fashion industry will soon make it an (expensive) success symbol.

Sincerely,
SARAH MULHOLLAND,
39 Private Road, Nottingham,
January 6.

Changes in the City

From Mrs M. R. Harkness

Sir, Can someone please explain to me why old women, whether from Throgmorton Street or elsewhere (letter, January 6), are invariably men (of any age) and never elderly ladies?

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET HARKNESS,
7 Cloisters Road,
Leichworth Garden City,
Hertfordshire.

Still running

From Mr Anthony Baker

Sir, Jonathan Robinson (letter, January 3) quotes Matthew Arnold's famous words about "this strange disease of modern life, with its sick hurry" without mentioning that Arnold is said to have died of heart failure after running to catch a tram.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY BAKER,
Ladram,
Sidcot, Winccombe, Somerset.

Where rivers flow

From Dr P. J. S. Whitmore

Sir, Whether the Derwent "rushes past the glory of Chatsworth" as Mr Roy Hattersley has it (Weekend, January 6) or merely flows is a matter of opinion. It is, however, a matter of geographical fact that it does neither past Haddon, where the river is the Wye.

Yours faithfully,
P. J. S. WHITMORE,
Woodlands, Denstone,
Uttoxeter, Staffordshire,
January 6.

Mergers and takeovers

From Mr David Gordon

Sir, William Rees-Mogg (article, January 11) supports Forte in its resistance to the hostile bid from Granada, and attacks conglomerates.

In admitting a prejudice for Forte — he was once chairman of its publishing subsidiary — he seems unaware of the contradiction in his argument that the admission throws up: for a hotels group to own a book publisher is a pretty conglomeratic thing to do — and yet did not prevent Forte from being, in Rees-Mogg's words, "a very well run company".

Now let me admit my prejudice for Gerry Robinson. He was on the board of ITN while I was chief executive and became its chairman at the time of my resignation. I have rarely come across a businessman as straightforward, clear-thinking and effective.

As to this pro-anti-conglomerate argument, the fact is that all large companies are an agglomeration of quite separate operating units, and at Granada they are clustered around leisure. Rees-Mogg gave examples of acquisitive conglomerates that met a sticky end, but what about GE in the

US, one of the best companies in the world, and unashamedly diversified?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GORDON
(Chief Executive, ITN, 1993-95),
212 Piccadilly, W1,
January 11.

From Mr M. E. B. Walters

Sir, "The City has repeatedly found easy money in corporate finance", writes William Rees-Mogg. I concur. As a stockbroker I have now dealt in both the original and the reincarnation of House of Fraser, Albright & Wilson, Exco, Wiggins Teape (now Arjo Wiggins), Ruberoid and Chubb. All these companies were originally acquired by conglomerates and subsequently unbundled, with no doubt "all the fun of the fair" fees.

Watch for Dunlop returning to the market following a recent demerger. And any betting that your readers will once again stay at a Trusthouse-owned Trust House hotel?

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN WALTERS,
Little Wardrobes, Wardrobes Lane,
Loosley Row, Princes Risborough,
Buckinghamshire,
January 11.

Britain and Europe

From the Leader of the UK Independence Party

Sir, Mr Gordon Smith (letter, January 8) is surely being obtuse in his speculations concerning how Dr Peter Chapman (letter, December 23) would cast his vote.

Of course Dr Chapman will refuse to vote Labour or Liberal Democrat. However, given his evident intelligence and patriotism he is hardly likely to be fooled by naive claims that John Major has been "skillfully negotiating to keep our liberties whilst profiting commercially from such aspects of the EU as are not completely corrupt". Your past editorials have been only too eloquent regarding the economic and political costs to the country incurred by such of Mr Major's initiatives as ERM membership and the Maastricht treaty.

No, Dr Chapman assures me that he will be voting for the UK Independence Party.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN SKED,
Leader, UK Independence Party,
80 Regent Street, W1,
January 9.

A tasty dish

From Mr Richard Smith

Sir, Zander (report by Robin Young and leading article, January 10) is mentioned in a British cook book. It is in André L. Simon's *Guide to Food and Wines*, in the fish section under perch.

The giant perch of Germany, the zander, abounds in the Elbe and is one of the gastronomic glories of Dresden. The best ways of cooking a perch are the same as for grayling.

Grayling are usually cooked like trout.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD SMITH,
Tudor Cottage,
Lilley, Aylesbury,
Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire,
January 10.

Weekend Money letters, page 39

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

In some ways Esperanto is a most annoying language. For one thing it has no exceptions. Now a language without exceptions is like a human being without faults, a sort of prig among languages. Again, all the terminations are standardized, and all the accents are on the penultimate. The result is monotony, as was evidenced by the speeches and songs last night. But there is no doubt about the enthusiasm of this body of Esperantists ["ne estas dubo de la entuziasmo de tiuj Esperantistoj"] and we hope they will keep it up. "kaj ni esperos ko ili keepas it up". How easy the language is to learn is shown by the amount we seem to have picked up since we started writing this article.

NEWS

Thatcher fails to unnerve Major

John Major responded to Baroness Thatcher's broadside against his Government by telling her that he would not be budged from the course on which he had embarked. Rejecting her calls for a more right-wing agenda and her assault on One Nation Toryism, he said: "I will not be pushed off what I believe to be right."

Ministers to flout EU game law

Ministers are set to defy a new European Union regulation that would wreak havoc on the shooting of game birds such as pheasant and partridge. Landowners will breathe a sigh of relief after the Government indicated that it will not enforce a ban on a drug that prevents wasting diseases in game birds.

Drug appeal

Helen Cousins, who won a fight for life after taking Ecstasy, asked young people to avoid a "dance with death".

'Stalker' cleared

Bernard Quinn, the obsessive stalker of the Princess Royal, was cleared of the charge that a breach of the peace was likely to be occasioned by him.

Battle of Newbury

The Battle of Newbury began when the police arrested 34 bypass protesters and contractors felled more than 300 trees.

Euro-sceptic anger

Tory Euro-sceptics were furious after the Government decided to sign up again with the European Court of Human Rights.

Laser lifesaver

A laser gun treatment for coronary disease that involves shooting holes in the heart is being introduced to the NHS.

Morocco awaits its 'magnificent man'

Marrakesh was full of hot air but none of it was in Richard Branson's balloon. The millionaire adventurer postponed his arrival in Morocco for 72 hours but that did not stop the build up of publicity and a carnival atmosphere for the start of his round-the-world balloon flight attempt.

Last laugh

Politicians, royals and other celebrities are bracing themselves for a final savaging from the puppets of *Spitting Image*, the longest-running satirical TV show.

Mineshaft graves

Allegations that up to 8,000 bodies may be buried in mineshafts in Bosnia guarded by Serb soldiers have been passed to the UN war crimes tribunal.

Hostage offer

Two Russian politicians said that they would volunteer to be hostages under demands made by the gunmen holding hostages on the Chechen border.

Clinton defiance

Hillary Clinton flatly denied the various allegations that are threatening to engulf her.

Defending buffalo

American Indians have gone to court to try to stop a buffalo hunt in New Mexico.



Finalists for the BBC Young Musicians of the Year competition practising yesterday in Birmingham

OPINION

A greedy bird: John Major is the only political leader of a major European country able to predict that people's disposable incomes will rise this year and that unemployment will go on falling.

Up and away: In spite of their astonishing modern technology the balloonists are still fulfilling man's old dream, to win, to circumnavigate the globe, to fly.

Mr Clinton proved that presidents are generally better off for these extended encounters with the press.

— Washington Post

Whatever the reasons for the President's trip to Bosnia, it is unlikely it will be very uplifting.

— Washington Times

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: I have the words in my notebook: "He is gold, pure gold." The words were Lady Thatcher's of John Major.

Roger Scruton: She was uttering what would be recognized as the philosophy of conservatism by anyone who had bothered to read the Tory classics.

Lawrence Neal, chairman of Daniel Neal & Sons, 1939-63; Eric Hebborn, art forger; Sir Harold Bailey, Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University, 1938-67.

— Page 21

Art for sale: Recession has made dealers more anxious to woo ordinary buyers; Richard Morrison on why talent is often smothered.

— Page 17

BRITAIN

British Gas: The company is committed to re-negotiating the £40 billion of take-or-pay contracts with North Sea gas producers.

Electricity: One of the directors of Manweb, who has shared a controversial £4 million pay-off after being taken over, has found another job in the industry.

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 2.4 to 3657.3. Sterling's index rose from 83.0 to 83.3 after a rise from \$1.5440 to \$1.5472 and from DM2.2212 to DM2.2291.

— Page 28

Art for sale: Recession has made dealers more anxious to woo ordinary buyers; Richard Morrison on why talent is often smothered.

— Page 17

100 years of British: Looking back and on the road ahead.

— Page 42

FOOTBALL

All five leading contenders to succeed Terry Venables as England coach have announced that they do not want the post.

Cricket: Dickie Bird, who has umpired more Tests than anyone else, will stand in his last one at Lord's in June.

Rugby union: Harlequins announced a three-year sponsorship by NEC, the Japanese communications company. Dancing girls will be a feature of games.

Tennis: Greg Rusedski, the British No 1, has been drawn against Boris Becker in the Australian Open.

— Page 42

SATURDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

Cheese is murder: The truth about meat-eating is unsettling but then so is dairy production. Page 8

Julian Barnes: Christopher Hawtree talks to him about his latest novel. Page 18

Jane MacQuitty: That alcoholic lemonade. Page 47

WEEKEND

Elizabeth's story: A royal marriage — the first part of Sarah Bradford's portrait of the Queen. Pages 1-5

Travel: Newlywed in the Caribbean; Turkish simplicity; Disney's America. Pages 5-11

Books: French intelligence; Doodle Smith: a publishing entrepreneur. Pages 12, 13

10 15

The weekly magazine for young Times readers

Keep on Trekkin': happy birthday to one of the world's most popular science fiction series. Page 6

War: Sony PlayStations, tickets to *Dangerous Minds*, the *Now 32* album. Page 3

Recommended: TV, music, books and films. Page 10

VISION

The seven-day guide to television and radio

Cover story: Aretha Franklin, Mahalia Jackson and Rosetta Tharpe illuminate the history of gospel in *Omnibus*, Monday, BBC1, 10.40pm

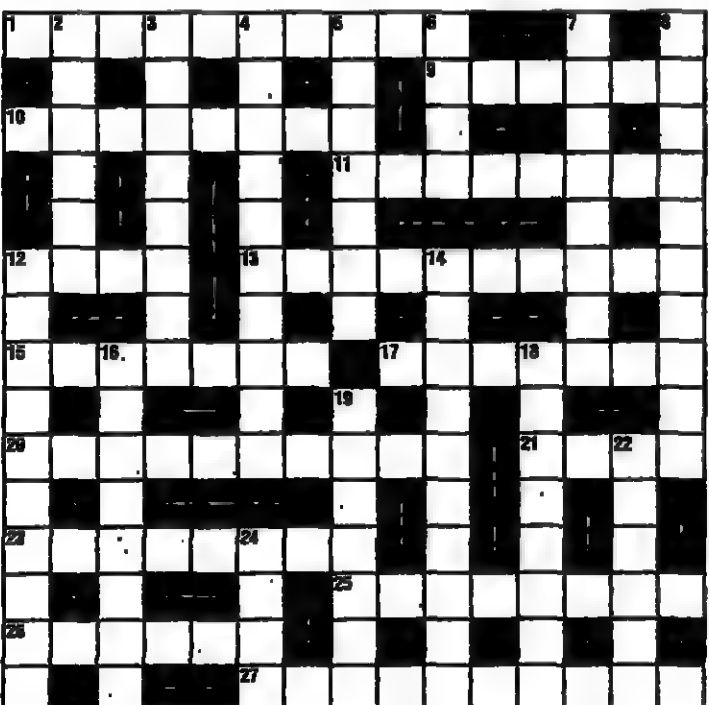
The House: A year in the life of the Royal Opera House begins on Tuesday, BBC2, 9.30pm

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,063

ABERLOUR

A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



ACROSS

- Wall socket for a juice extractor (5,5).
- Loose overcoat's woolly rustle (6).
- Pisa, associated with nice original Roman baths (8).
- Physician fighting onset of malaria, with moderate temperature (8).
- That woman, first of all among the gods (4).
- Crazy family that's likely to cause an upset (6,4).
- Inquisitive about, say, a bouquet (7).
- Congenial Russian relations (7).
- Invest in gripping film (6,4).
- Remaining on top (4).
- Fugitive has to smuggle gem (8).
- Keep principal reserves at home (8).
- Etcher with an eye for an opening (6).
- Small jumper found in old teabag (4,6).

DOWN

- Tranquilliser one swallowed is holding up work (6).
- Amplify output from a cefesta (8).
- Early collectable item girl put on jet (5,5).
- Country importing one hundred antelope (7).
- Gather food (4).
- Assault with access to the king (8).
- Concert-goer who likes being at the front (10).
- Horse with resilience in gymnastic feat (10).
- Secure with language? Women have it at their fingertips (4,6).
- Local journalist stumped by impostor (8).
- Sliced bread poorest could possibly afford, under a penny once (8).
- Privileged chap not subject to tax on island (7).
- Remove from duty (6).
- The ones that win in court (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,057

Solution to Puzzle No 20,062

BEST MATCHLESS
U O H A O A N M
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L A G E S I D A
C A I R T I N E I G H T
C R E M O N A G L A S S E S
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ACCUSION MORASS
L P I O I V T
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N I E B R R H
C O N C E R T O A E N E I D
E E L P P E O
R H E U M Y E V E N S O N G

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: J S Wills, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire; J D Dixon, Sheffield; E Wright, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria; D Y Benham, Scarborough, North Yorkshire; J Freeman, Altringham, Cheshire.

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TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the code.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Greater London | 701 |
| West/Surrey/Sussex | 702 |
| Devon & Cornwall | 703 |
| Wales/Gloucester/Hereford | 704 |
| West Midlands | 705 |
| East Midlands | 706 |
| North East | 707 |
| North West | 708 |
| Yorkshire & the Humber | 709 |
| East of England | 710 |
| London & SE England | 711 |
| W & S Wales | 712 |
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| W & S Wales | 726 |

Weathercall is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/news information, 24 hours a day, dial 0330 4001 followed by the code.

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| London & SE traffic, roadworks | 727 |
| West/Surrey/Sussex | 728 |
| Devon & Cornwall | 729 |
| Wales/Gloucester/Hereford | 730 |
| West Midlands | 731 |
| East Midlands | 732 |
| North East | 733 |
| North West | 734 |
| Yorkshire & the Humber | 735 |
| East of England | 736 |
| London & SE England | 737 |
| W & S Wales | 738 |
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AA Roadwatch is charged at 20p per minute (cheap rate) and 40p per minute at other times.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

| Today | Tomorrow |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sun sets: 4:02 am | Sun sets: 4:17 pm |
| Moon sets: 1:00 am | Moon sets: 1:00 am |
| 10:59 am | |

Last quarter today

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| London 4:17 pm to 8:01 am | 751 |
| Edinburgh 4:27 pm to 8:10 am | 752 |
| Manchester 4:08 pm to 8:26 am | 753 |
| Perthshire 4:44 pm to 8:17 am | 754 |

HIGH TIDES

| Today | Tomorrow |
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MELVYN MARCKUS 26

Our City Editor shoots the breeze about Granada

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

WORKING WEEK 27

Concocting a knockout brew amid the chaos



SPORT 42-48

Net improvement brings fresh hope for Henman

THE HIDDEN ASSETS OF WHITBREAD

Page 27

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY JANUARY 13 1996

Dismissal threat to sale of Gartmore

By ROBERT MILLER

THE chairman of Banque Indosuez, one of France's leading investment houses and the owner of Gartmore, the British fund management group, will be dismissed on Monday after a meeting of the bank's board to confirm the decision.

Sources in Paris said yesterday that the sacking of Jean-François Lepetit, the chairman of Banque Indosuez, could lead to an urgent review of Banque Indosuez's decision to sell Gartmore, in which it has a 75 per cent stake.

M. Lepetit, who has just completed a six-month review of the bank's strategy with McKinsey, the management consultants, will be replaced by Christian Maurin, chairman of Banque Sofinco, an Indosuez subsidiary.

It is understood that Banque Indosuez, which will shortly unveil losses well in excess of £100 million, is discussing compensation terms with M. Lepetit for his loss of office, which includes leaving the main board of Gartmore.

The French bank, which accrued the "significant" losses from loans to, and direct investment in, properties in Paris, is soon to renege all its considerable property debts into Crédit-Suez, another subsidiary.

The imminent departure of M. Lepetit from Banque Indosuez, which is wholly owned by Compagnie de Suez, has held up the sale of the bank's stake in Gartmore, which has £25 billion of funds invested in a range of

trusts, pension schemes and 11 investment trusts. A source in Paris said that the whole group was suffering from a complete lack of direction and that rather than address the problems, the senior management had turned in on itself, which led to the departure of the chairman.

Banque Indosuez put its Gartmore stake up for sale last September and immediately sparked a flurry of interest from British and European banks and finance houses.

One of the earliest bidders was BAT Industries, the tobacco-to-financial services group, while Dresdner, the German bank, was also rumoured to be in the running. BAT was said to be very keen to add Gartmore to its stable of financial services companies which include household names such as Allied Dunbar, Eagle Star and Threadneedle Asset Management.

In the past month, however, the list of buyers for Gartmore has narrowed to two European houses.

The one most frequently cited is Bankgesellschaft Berlin, the state-owned German bank, which was rumoured to have tabled a bid worth more than £500 million. The German bank could enter into a joint deal with the US NationsBank, which has an option to buy 25 per cent of Gartmore's shares. NationsBank and Gartmore already have a 50/50 Nations

Gartmore venture in the US. The identity of the second European bidder is unknown. Last August, Gartmore announced that interim profits in the six months to June 30 fell by more than £1 million to £16.2 million and held the halfway dividend at 1.75p. The group said that a heavy investment programme in staff and computer systems more than offset additional fees earned from the extra £1.3 billion increase in new funds.

Paul Myners, chairman of Gartmore, said last night: "I can neither confirm nor deny any of the speculation. I cannot comment." On the stock exchange, Gartmore's shares closed last night unchanged on the day at 269p.



The hat fits: Anita Roddick, founder and chief executive of Body Shop International, the natural beauty products retailer, received an honorary doctorate from Kingston University, Surrey, in a ceremony held at the Barbican Centre in London yesterday

SE gives three options for automated trading plan

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE Stock Exchange has put forward three options for the introduction of fully automated trading services in August this year. It has given its 350 members and other market participants until February 17 to respond to a consultation paper seeking their responses to the three options.

They are: replacing the current system with an electronic order-matching system for trading all shares, with a separate "upstairs" system of trading unusually large blocks of shares; having an order book for some shares and continuing the current quote-driven system for others; or trying to accommodate both with a split-screen or hybrid approach so that there is an order-matching system

on one screen and a quote-driven system on another. Institutional investors and market-makers are divided over the options. Institutions have been pushing the exchange to introduce a choice of systems and would tend to favour the third approach.

However, market-makers say it would be unworkable. Most have dropped their objections to the idea of an order-matching system, but say market-makers would not wish to expose themselves by quoting prices on one screen, whereby they put large amounts of capital at risk, if there was an order-matching system on the other.

Once the consultation process has closed, a steering committee chaired by John

Kemp-Welch, chairman of the exchange, will make a recommendation to the board by March 21.

It is possible that the implementation of order-matching could be delayed beyond the Exchange's timetable of August 27, if market-makers are not ready. Giles Vardey, director of markets development at the exchange, said that changes were not being imposed on the market, "part of the motivation for bringing in these changes is to reflect what changes are already occurring".

Mr Vardey reiterated the exchange's commitment to the policies established by Michael Lawrence, who was sacked as chief executive nine days ago.

British Gas takes stand on contracts

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH GAS last night insisted that it remains committed to renegotiating its £40 billion of take-or-pay contracts with North Sea gas producers and dismissed suggestions that it was likely to seek bank support for a bail-out scheme.

Although the Government may take powers to impose a levy on Britain's 18 million household gas users if North Sea producers cannot be persuaded to renegotiate high-priced contracts with British Gas, ministers are clearly anxious to avoid any new burden on consumers.

If the full liability under the take-or-pay contracts, estimated at £1.14 billion, was passed on, customers could face an average additional charge of £63.33 on their bill. British Gas has provided only £83 million against any liabilities.

The levy proposal, described as an "insurance policy" by the Department of Trade and Industry, could be needed if the Government is obliged to intervene. It would enable the DTI to share the cost of remodelling the contracts between producers, the company losing the monopoly, and domestic consumers, as happened during a similar transition in Canada.

Under the Canadian Take-or-Pay Gas (TOPGas) scheme, a panel of banks loaned money to enable the supply company to buy out part of the contracts.

A British Gas spokeswoman insisted that while several alternative strategies have been reviewed, the company remained determined to negotiate price cuts with gas producers.

"We are deadly serious about this," she said. "We would hardly have recruited Ken Gardiner, one of the best negotiators in the business, if we were otherwise." And she added: "We have certainly not been talking to banks."

WEEKEND MONEY



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Anne Ashworth on the Woolwich flotation

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Start work and start saving. The advice of the experts

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Holes in the regulatory umbrella

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Low point for US high technology stocks

BUSINESS TODAY

| | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|
| FT-SE 100 | 2697.8 | (+2.4) |
| FT-SE 100 All share | 1793.43 | (+1.53) |
| Nikkei | 28287.48 | (-90.50) |
| Dow Jones | 8025.72 | (-30.38) |
| S&P Composite | 887.53 | (-4.88) |

| | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| Federal Funds | 5 1/4% | (5 1/4%) |
| Long Bond | 100 1/2% | (100 1/2%) |
| Yield | 6.18% | (6.15%) |

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|------------|
| 3-month interbank | 6 1/4% | (6 1/4%) |
| Life long gilt | 110 1/2% | (110 1/2%) |

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| New York | 1.5400* | (1.5440) |
| London | 1.5400 | (1.5439) |
| DE | 2.2314 | (2.2221) |
| FF | 7.8500 | (7.8220) |
| SF | 1.7500 | (1.7525) |
| Yen | 162.85 | (161.70) |
| E Index | 83.3 | (83.0) |

| | | |
|----------|---------|-----------|
| US\$ 100 | 1.4400* | (1.4417) |
| DE | 4.9355* | (4.9477) |
| FF | 1.1807* | (1.1818) |
| SF | 1.0511* | (1.04.50) |
| Yen | 94.6 | (94.5) |

| | | |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Tokyo close Yen 105.30 | | |
| Brent 15-day (Mar) | \$16.90 | (\$17.40) |

| | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|
| London close | \$399.35 | (\$398.75) |
|--------------|----------|------------|

* denotes midday trading price

Midland deal

Midland Bank has become the latest of the high street banks and building societies to own a fully independent life business after buying out a former joint venture partner. Midland bought Commercial Union's remaining 20 per cent stake in Midland Life for £50 million yesterday. Page 26

Pensions review rethink

By ROBERT MILLER

THE senior City watchdog in charge of the £4 billion pension mis-selling review has backed down under pressure from professional risk insurers who underwrite policies that pay compensation to victims.

The Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the regulator for firms that sell direct to the public, yesterday confirmed that letters to 100,000 investors who may have been wrongly advised by independent financial advisers will not

say that they are entitled to redress and will have the word "compensation" removed. Investors will now have to actively seek a review of their cases rather than be granted one automatically.

Professional indemnity (PI) insurers have consistently refused to allow independent financial advisers (IFAs) covered by their policies to participate in the review of personal pensions mis-selling as laid down by the PIA because they claimed inves-

tors were being invited to claim compensation.

Before yesterday's accord, the PIA was preparing to levy £250 administrative fines on IFAs who refused to take part in the review. Now an amnesty has been declared while advisers initiate their part in the review process.

It has been estimated that 100,000 of the 400,000 urgent cases of alleged mis-selling were sold by IFAs. The regulator denied that the deal with PI insurers was a climbdown.

Forte says bid sets up tax pitfall

FORTE yesterday claimed that Granada's £3.8 billion bid would lead to big tax disadvantages for Forte shareholders and any combined company (Alasdair Murray writes).

Forte argues that shareholders will not be entitled to tax relief on the 47p special dividend proposed by Granada. This will mean tax-exempt investors and pension funds losing 12p a share, or up to £100 million in total.

Forte cites tax experts' advice that Granada's revised offer differs from special dividends in utility bids last year by letting shareholders choose the dividend or a lower cash offer. Forte says that the Inland Revenue will apply anti-avoidance law and restrict the tax credit.

Forte also says Granada has misjudged the tax position on its proposed disposals and that Granada will be liable for tax of £400 million from the estimated £1.1 billion sale of Forte assets.

Granada rejected Forte's claims, saying that even correct they would affect Forte's own proposed share buy-back.

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Swalec job for ex-Manweb chief

By GEORGE SIVELL

ONE of the directors of Manweb, who shared a controversial £4 million pay-off after being taken over, has found another job in the electricity industry.

Welsh Water is to appoint John Roberts as chief executive of South Wales Electricity if Welsh Water's bid for Swalec is successful. The bid is being examined by regulators of the water and electricity industries. He will also become a director of Welsh Water if the bid succeeds.

Mr Roberts was one of six executive and three non-executive directors who shared a package of £4 million when ScottishPower won a closely fought takeover battle for Manweb in October last year.

Mr Roberts was Manweb chief executive from 1992 until the takeover by ScottishPower and was paid £170,000 a year on a two-year rolling contract. Compensation on salary alone would have been £340,000 and he is understood to have had £164,000 of options.



Roberts shared £4 million



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Bollinger, Granada and Hegel

Let me tell you about a pal of mine called Nicky Rossini. Nicky and I go back a decade or so but, that said, what I know about Nicky's business interests you could stick in your eye and you wouldn't notice. Nicky spent a spell at Harvard but you wouldn't notice that either because mostly he likes to adopt a low-key style. Nicky likes people to underestimate him. From time to time, Nicky blows into town and we take a glass. Last week was such a week and I found Nicky in a Knightsbridge hotel seated alongside a black leather bar sipping a glass of Bollinger.

Nicky, wearing a sunhat that never came out of a health club and a suit that never came out of a multiple, grins and tells me I look pale.

I tell him paleness goes with the territory. We sip some Bollinger, wisecrack, eye the Knightsbridge Rangers, and then, all of a sudden, Nicky slings me a long look. "So what's with this Granada/Forte show?"

MM: "The show's coming to an

end, Nicky. It's up to the institutions."

Nicky: "The institutions usually get takeovers wrong. The irony is that pension funds and life insurance companies should be the ultimate exponents of the long-term game. You tell me, what's more long term than maximising a pension fund? Building a business, maybe, but the institutions never seem to catch on to it. If a guy offers you a couple of bucks for an asset valued at a dollar-fifty he probably reckons it's worth three before he sweats it. What the pension funds should do is ensure the assets sweat. Take that Blackberry report I read about."

MM: "The Greenbury report."

Nicky: "Yeah. Now one of the things Greenbury said, sort of between the lines, was how the institutions preferred to influence corporate governance matters behind the scenes. That's fine, but how the hell do the institutions think they are going to influence industrialists if everyone knows

that all it takes is a lollipop to be shoved into a fund manager's mouth for the company to be sold down the river?"

MM: "Are you suggesting, Nicky, that this is not a deal made in heaven?"

Nicky laughs, calls for a refill. Nicky: "Look, Forte was undervalued, it's as simple as that. I have never met the Fortes but you know what Italians are like. A lot of style but they're not flash, they don't wear it on the cuff. Milan isn't like LA; it's all wrought iron gates and shutters. You can't peer into people's homes in northern Italy. This is all to do with the Italian psyche which I will not bore you with. Forte was undervalued but is that a sin? Would you rather have your pension fund full of undervalued shares or overvalued shares? What Forte put together with Little Chef, Happy Eater and Welcome Break was a brand name monopoly in roadside catering. Monopoly is a sensitive word but that is what any businessman with an ounce of savvy dreams about. Granada



MELVYN MARCKUS

hasn't done that. I couldn't even tell you what Granada's motorway establishments are called.

MM: "Granada/Burger King." Nicky: "Ask the public if they want more Burger Kings. See what response you get."

MM: "You're hardly supportive of this deal." Nicky: "Who is? Read the papers. This is a deal made in good old EC2. Why else would you create a

company with debts of £4 billion which, in order to bring its gearing down to 70 per cent, which is hardly low, has to embark on asset sales of £2 billion. The way to sell an asset is to have it torn away from you. You don't shout from the rooftops of a merchant bank that divestment is your game plan. It's great for the advisers and the underwriters. By the end of the day fees for this little charade are going to tot up to the thick end of £250 million. What the public never catch on to is who bears the cost. This guy Gerry Robinson has made no secret of the fact that he intends to jack up margins. That will hit the consumer. Then we hear about squeezing an extra £100 million worth of profits out of Forte's operations. How much of that £100 million will relate to redundancies? Whatever the outcome, Granada's bid has made redundancies inevitable. The real irony, of course, is that should Granada, given a few years, go the way of most conglomerates, the loser wouldn't be the fund manager who assented Forte shares but the

policyholder whose funds are actually on the line."

MM: "Maybe, in an era of corporate glasnost, institutions should disclose the way they vote in contested takeover bids?"

Nicky: "Why not. Stand up and be counted."

MM: "Like Carol Galley, at Mercury Asset Management?"

Nicky: "Now there's a broad who would make one helluva craps player. Judging from her stake she realised Forte was undervalued long before Mr Robinson. MAM is still buying and now holds more than 15 per cent of Forte and around 14 per cent of Granada. Calley looks set to win whatever the outcome but she has to watch her eye."

MM: "Why?"

Nicky: "Because, as of now, Granada is perceived as the corporate raider, not MAM."

We order one more glass.

Nicky: "This bid isn't over yet. Forte's tax counsel, Linklaters & Paines and Price Waterhouse, have been focusing on Granada's pro-

posed special dividend of 47p per share and the associated tax credit of 11.75p per share to be paid from Forte's reserves. They believe that the Inland Revenue will argue against a tax credit refund on the special dividend for tax exempt shareholders. They also believe that higher-rate taxpayers who opt for the extra payment will be denied the capital gains tax treatment, with the payment taxed as income. The other argument you should look into is whether Granada's proposal to pay a special dividend out of the Meridian sale constitutes buying a company with its own money. Such an action would contravene Section 151 of the Companies Act, although Granada's lawyers may have discovered some loophole."

MM: "And what do I say to the fund managers, Nicky?"

Nicky: "Remind them of the Eighties and tell them to read Hegel. Tell them to read the bit about what history teaches us is that people never learn anything from history, or act on the principles deduced from it."

Midland buys final CU stake in life business

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

MIDLAND BANK has become the latest of the high street banks and building societies to own a fully independent life business after buying Commercial Union's final stake in Midland Life for £50 million yesterday.

Midland had until August this year to exercise an option to buy the remaining 20 per cent investment held by Commercial Union, its former joint venture partner.

The insurer, which helped Midland to set up its life arm in 1988, originally held a 35 per cent stake after investing £4 million. That stake had been reducing gradually.

The move confirms the increasing dominance of the bancassurance — subsidiaries of banks and building societies selling life and pensions products through high street branches.

By selling through existing branch networks, they avoid

the overheads of maintaining a separate sales organisation. Their market share of life and pensions sales is estimated at about 20 per cent.

NatWest, TSB, the Woolwich and the Halifax Building Society run life arms. This week, Standard Life, the UK's largest life company, said that new business had fallen by a third after its agreement to supply all pensions and investment products to Halifax ended.

Meanwhile, Scottish Mutual Assurance, the life company bought for £285 million by Abbey National in 1992, has bucked the industry trend by almost doubling its annual life and pensions business.

In a year during which fierce competition and a huge drop in sales after the pensions mis-selling scandal dogged the market, its total new annual life and pensions business rose 93 per cent to £76.2 million in 1995

(£18.8 million). Industry analysts said that the rise came from a combination of financial support from Abbey National and a new young, aggressive management team. The mutual claimed it had made its life products more attractive by improving transfer values for pensions and had cut operating expense ratios from 125 to 104 per cent on annualised new business.

Total new premium business was £506 million, compared with £462 million in 1994, of which new single premium life and pensions business accounted for £443 million (£470 million).

The industry measure of growth, worked out by adding total annual business to 10 per cent of single premium business, showed Scottish Mutual had increased business 32 per cent in 1995.

Tempus, page 28



Frank van Wezel expects trading to remain tough, with the cutting of costs a priority

Hi-Tec saves cash by passing payout

By MARTIN BARROW

HI-TEC, the sports footwear manufacturer, has passed the payment of an interim dividend as it seeks to conserve cash to sustain the momentum of its recovery in the face of tough trading conditions.

Helped by the disposal of loss-making businesses and a wide-ranging cost-cutting exercise, Hi-Tec returned to profit in the six months to October 31, earning £610,000 before tax. In the first half of the previous year, the company incurred losses of £6.57 million, and full-year losses totalled £12.54 million.

Frank van Wezel, chairman, said that the company expected difficult trading to persist in the second half, with a forecast upturn in consumer spending

in Britain and America having only a modest impact. "We expect to pursue similar trading policies to those in the first half of the year, with continued attention to operating margins and the reduction of both overheads and working capital requirements," he said.

Turnover from continuing operations fell by 12 per cent, because of tough trading and persistent destocking, notably in North America and the UK. Mr van Wezel said it would be "some time yet" before the market for outdoor sports footwear absorbed surplus stocks.

Interim earnings of 0.27p a share compared with losses of 14.29p last time. The previous interim dividend was 1.58p. The shares rose 1p, to 33p.

Hodder is bullish on book sales

By SARAH BAGNALL

TIM HELY HUTCHINSON, chief executive of Hodder Headline, says he is cautiously optimistic that last September's collapse of the price-fixing agreement on books will stimulate the market.

"We are cautiously optimistic that the recent changes will stimulate steady, profitable growth in the UK consumer book market," he said.

Mr Hely Hutchinson's remark was made as he disclosed a 13 per cent rise in sales in the three months to December 31, helped by a sharp rise in business with non-traditional booksellers, such as supermarkets. Hodder expects to report a 10 per cent rise in sales to £59 million for the year to December 31.

Richard Adam, 38, who has been chief financial officer of The Family Channel is to become Hodder Headline's finance director on April 15.

After a slow summer in the UK book market, sales were relatively strong towards Christmas. Hodder, which quit the Net Book Agreement in September 1994, issued a profit warning that month, blaming weak consumer demand.

Aggressive price policy lifts Argos

By SARAH BAGNALL

ARGOS, the catalogue retailer, has revealed that its aggressive pricing policy for the holiday period saw a 14 per cent leap in sales in the five weeks before Christmas.

Argos traditionally makes more than 85 per cent of its profits in the second half of the year, which includes Christmas. The company saw like-for-like sales rise 8 per cent in the five weeks, a slight improvement on the 7.2 per cent advance in the first half.

The City was pleased with the news, especially as the increased sales were not achieved at the expense of gross margin.

Sir Richard Lloyd, chairman, said: "Despite keener pricing in our autumn/winter catalogue, we have managed and withstood the downward pressure on gross margin."

Argos did not refer to plans for its £200 million cash pile. In August, the company said it was looking to buy. If an appropriate candidate is not found, the company could undertake a share buyback or a special dividend payment.

Tempus, page 28

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Littlewoods reduces Iceland concessions

LITTLEWOODS, the football pools to chain store empire, has decided to reduce the number of Iceland concessions in its stores. Only last month, Iceland, the frozen food retailer, joined forces with N Brown, the home shopping group, to launch a £1.1 billion offer for Littlewoods. The approach amounted to nothing as the company's shareholders voted to remain private for the time being. Bob Willett, managing director of the Littlewoods chain stores, said: "Discussions with Iceland over the concessions started well before the takeover approach. Talks have been on-going for at least eight months."

The number of Iceland concessions in Littlewoods 130 stores is to be reduced by 11 to a total of 37. Mr Willett said that the move reflected the group's desire to expand the prime floor space given to its Berkeleys range, which accounts for 60 per cent of Littlewoods' "women'swear sales." "We decided to look at all of the concessions in the store to see if we could make a better use of the space," he said. Of the remaining Iceland concessions, which are mainly in non-prime space in the Littlewoods stores, the lives of 14 concessions have been extended by four years.

Hughes sales disappoint

TJ HUGHES, the discount department store operator based in the northwest of England, told shareholders yesterday that current year profits would fall short of last year's pre-tax earnings of £1.6 million. Hughes said that although sales improved over Christmas on a like-for-like basis, they were insufficient to counter a disappointing autumn sales period. The company, which faces higher interest and distribution costs, said price competition had intensified, resulting in lower margins. The shares fell 2p to 58p.

Rhino profits warning

SHARES in Rhino Group, the computer and video games retailer that owns the Future Zone chain, fell 14p to 114p after the company gave a warning that full-year results would be below market expectations after December sales fell short of earlier hopes. Rhino blames slower than expected implementation of a new stock management system and aggressive discounting by rivals. Rhino lifted sales, but suffered margin erosion. Electronics Boutique, of the US, last year took a 25 per cent stake in the company.

Tomkins bid message

TOMKINS, the industrial conglomerate, yesterday sought to allay fears about the outcome of protracted negotiations related to the proposed acquisition of privately owned Gates Rubber, the US auto component manufacturer, for an estimated \$1.1 billion with assumption of about \$240 million debts. Tomkins said: "Negotiations have been satisfactorily completed and all essential terms of the contracts agreed." However it said, "a couple of technical issues, unrelated to the business, remain outstanding."

Dawson shares soar

SHARES in Dawson Holdings, quoted on the AIM, rose to £10 from 890p yesterday, even though the newspaper and magazine distributor reported profit decline to £3.5 million before tax from £4.5 million for the year to September 30. The decline was attributed to losses at Faxon Inc, based in North America that was acquired earlier in the financial year. Faxon is expected to return to profit this year. Operating profits from continuing businesses were up 60 per cent. The dividend is lifted to 30p (29p), with a 20p final, payable on March 8.

More demand for oil

OIL demand from leading industrial nations was much higher than expected in the last quarter of 1995, and supplies were lower than expected, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reports. It said that the call on crude oil produced by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in last year's final quarter, plus stocks, was 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd) more than estimated at 26.7 million bpd. Opec production rose slightly in December to average 25.76 million bpd, its highest monthly average since April 1980.

TOURIST RATES

| | Bank | Bank |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| | Buy | Sell |
| Australia \$ | 2.17 | 2.01 |
| Austria Sch | 16.86 | 15.18 |
| Belgium Fr | 48.76 | 44.48 |
| Canada \$ | 2.07 | 1.95 |
| Cyprus Cyp | 0.740 | 0.685 |
| Denmark Kr | 8.22 | 8.42 |
| Finland Mk | 7.20 | 7.40 |
| France Fr | 6.05 | 6.05 |
| Germany Dr | 2.40 | 2.40 |
| Greece Dr | 384.00 | 217 |
| Hong Kong \$ | 12.56 | 359.00 |
| Ireland P | 2.17 | 11.56 |
| Israel Sh | 5.2100 | 0.84 |
| Italy Lira | 254.00 | 4.5800 |
| Japan Yen | 176.20 | 238.00 |
| Malta | 0.589 | 180.20 |
| Netherlands Gld | 2.846 | 0.534 |
| New Zealand \$ | 2.48 | 2.418 |
| Norway Kr | 10.36 | 2.28 |
| Portugal Esc | 242.50 | 8.58 |
| S Africa Rd | 184.50 | 234.00 |
| Spain Ps | 164.50 | 5.35 |
| Sweden Kr | 10.77 | 181.20 |
| Switzerland Fr | 1.30 | 9.27 |
| Turkey Lira | 1.50 | 1.75 |
| USA \$ | 1.538 | 875.00 |

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

COUNTER ATTACK

Reshuffling the top management at Sainsbury's was presented as a cure for the supermarket chain's woes. But is it also an admission that the company has lost its way...?

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مكذبا من الأصل

A WORKING WEEK FOR: GERRY ROBINSON

Concocting a knockout brew amid the chaos

This week Granada played its final hand in the bruising battle for Forte. Jon Ashworth talked to its ebullient chief executive

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

GERRY ROBINSON bounds into the room, hand outstretched, eyes sparkling. It is after 5pm on Wednesday — "or is it Thursday, the days tend to blur" — and Granada's chief executive is on a roll. His face stares back from a dozen newspapers, reflecting the latest twist in the gargantuan struggle for Forte, the embattled hotels-to-Happy Easter group. Robinson, 47, has gone for the knockout blow with his revised £3.8 billion bid, and feelings are running high.

The previous morning, Robinson and his advisers had trooped to the City for what was to prove a make-or-break presentation. They had spent the weekend finalising a package that was intended to seal Forte's fate once and for all. Granada can do no more — the matter is in the hands of the shareholders — and Robinson is happy he has given it his best shot.

Details of the revised offer, the source of so much weekend speculation, must have been carried out in conditions of utmost secrecy. "Actually it was at home in Holland Park," says Robinson, throwing back his head and giggling hysterically. "It was in the dining room, papers spread out before me, kids coming in, all wanting a say. My four-and-a-half year old [April]... My daughter clumping in with some railway girders. It was pretty chaotic."

Robinson, who earns £700,000 a year, has four children — two from his first marriage, and two infants, and the age gap makes for an interesting mix. Samantha, soon to be 21, is studying art — hence the girders. A long way behind Richard, 18, comes April, 4, and one-year-old Timothy. "You get in at three o'clock in the morning," says Robinson, chuckling gleefully, "there can be people coming home with all sort of undesirable, kids screaming... It's a real mix."

All this is a far cry from the image of Robinson the cut-throat corporate raider that one has come to expect, what with all this talk about shedding jobs and stripping assets. Why, Robinson is talking of trimming no less than £100 million a year out of Forte — surely no mean feat. "People tend to think of it all as costs," he says, growing serious, "but it is very often about growing the business. There's quite a large gap between cutting and hacking, and something that's genuinely built up and doing extraordinarily well."

An early victim of a Granada victory would be Forte's head office in London's Holborn, which has a staff of 290. Granada oversees its leisure, television and catering empire from a head office of 24. Robinson talks of the importance of keeping Granada's 45,000-strong workforce informed. "There is quite a responsibility about giving them a base — not falling off a cliff if it all goes wrong."

The clock on round two of the battle for Forte began ticking the moment Robinson stepped off the plane from Ireland ten days ago. He spent Christmas in Donegal, where he grew up, in a cottage overlooking the sea. Snow was heavy on the ground, but there was little time to admire the view. "Faxes were flying to and fro, phone calls were flying... Donegal being Donegal you could hardly get the car out of the drive." He seems genuinely surprised to hear of the snowstorms to hit America this week. He has been so caught up with the bid that world news has passed him by.

Replete with "too many mince pies and quite a lot of Guinness," Robinson flew back with British Airways (no corporate jets here, the Forte jet is high on the hit-list) and flung himself into the next stage of the contest. "Obviously, the first key issue was to decide how we were going to pick up the bid."

Everything was hinged to Tuesday's presentation to journalists and analysts, in which Robinson unveiled an innovative package that added £500 million to the value of the bid. "We were pretty keen to get right back to the basics of what the deal was about — why are we doing it? What's in it for shareholders?"

Much of the detail was finalised on Sunday. Robinson's advisers left his home about 10pm, giving him time to relax for an hour or so over a glass of red wine. "It's very difficult after that to go to bed, with your head spinning. Oddly enough, I slept like a log."

He was up at 6am, and set off for Granada's head office in Golden Square. "I spent an hour sorting out non-bid issues, opening the post, then began the whole process of finalising documents, typing up the deal. It went on until midnight." The day included meetings with a number of key Granada shareholders. "I think people forget who owns the business," says Robinson, reflecting that he and his colleagues are managers... and have a duty to keep the "owners" briefed. "You pick up a great deal by listening to what your shareholders have to say. You learn."

He prefers a spontaneous approach to speech-making. "I never rehearse a presentation more than once. If what you say is what you believe, you say it better, rather than reading it through 15 times. I always try to make it a bit light and uncomplicated. People in business take themselves far too seriously."

Granada's strategy relied on winning the support of the Council of Forte — a goal which, if sources are to be believed, saw Robinson confronting a room filled with elderly gentlemen nodding off over their glasses of port. Robinson is too tactful to comment but concedes: "Clearly, we would not have been happy to move forward without the council's support. They had the right, technically, to veto the bid." The council's hand was won with the promise of £50 million for the Forte trust



On a roll: Gerry Robinson and his management team masterminded Granada's revised bid in the "secrecy" of his dining room over the weekend

shares, and the deal was signed shortly before midnight on Monday.

It was not a restful night. "I didn't sleep well," says Robinson. "Clearly, ahead of a presentation, you're a bit unsettled. But it went very well with the analysts and the press." He left home at about 7am, travelling by chauffeur-driven Mercedes, and spent the rest of the day in one-to-one briefings, in between a hastily snatched salad lunch. "I feel terrible if I eat snacks — tired and out of sorts."

Lack of sleep and irregular dining may explain the unfortunate scene after the presentation when Robinson lost his cool with a journalist who was less than flattering about Granada's motorway restaurants. One observer says: "It got very nasty. He turned red, started sweating. The Granada board were really quite embarrassed." Be that as it may, Robinson was in his usual jocular form when we met, and showed no sign of cracking up under the stress.

Tuesday evening brought a welcome respite: Robinson went to see *Riverdance*. I picture Robinson, the Irishman, his eyes glinting as a haunting Gaelic sun rises over a misty landscape. He shrugs off such sentiment: "It was not quite a tear in the eye, but a kind of gutsy feeling."

Afterwards, he and his party dined at the only suitable venue in such circumstances: Deals, one of a chain-of-three backed by Lord Linley and Lord Lichfield.

"I've not been to it before," says Robinson. Typical fare includes hamburgers and spare ribs, and the menu plays on the idea of big deals, hot deals... During a bid, there is no escape.

Robinson went to bed at about 1.30am, and was up for an 8am meeting at Lazard's, the merchant bank. With Granada's cards on the table, it now comes down to selling the revised offer to Forte shareholders. "There are 13 days to

go," he says, looking at his watch with a theatrical flourish. "The whole thing comes to a finale at 1pm on the 23rd."

It is ironic that the BBC should choose this week to announce a new chairman in Sir Christopher Bland, Robinson's adversary during Granada's bid for London Weekend Television two years ago. Robinson, who steps up to become chairman of Granada in March, insists that the bid for LWT was quite different, even though the mechanics might be the same.

"It was never anything more than a very friendly affair," he says. "This one has become very heated: 'We want to acquire this company because we can run it a great deal better...' He shrugs. "You can move, can't you, from being hero to villain in three minutes flat."

Today Robinson is at Wisley Golf Club in Surrey, where Sir Rocco is also a member. "He's a very good golfer," says Robinson, claiming a stubborn 21 handicap. "My son more often than not gives me a hiding these days, which I find humiliating." Later, he goes to Suffolk to celebrate his sister Maureen's birthday.

Just over a week from now, Robinson and his team will know whether their audacious punt for Forte has paid off. He appears confident, as always, but gives little away. "Clearly, if we're successful, we will then embark on a fairly long period of deciding what to do with the business. If we fail, it will take two days to get over it, crying, and then..." That disarming Robinson smile. "We'll just get on with it."

HIDDEN ASSETS

Best draught horses that prove their pulling power

Joanna Pitman reports on how shires draw heavy loads and large crowds

A nation's broad character is usually displayed in its foreign policy, its formal and monumental architecture and in its great composers of literature and music. Curious of temperament are evident further away from the centre and one indicator of such is a nation's public ceremonies — its coronations, its grand openings of parliament, its state and public funerals, its civic shows and mayoral processions.

British ceremonies, like those of most countries, are of course designed to maximise the pomp and the magnificence of the occasion and as such are made compellingly moving.

But for the British public, the impact seems to be all the greater if these events can be made to incorporate scores of glossy-maned horses, occupying key roles and decked out in highly polished gear, such as the exquisitely groomed horses that pulled the Queen to Westminster Abbey for her Coronation.

And it is the shire horse, descendant of the trusty old mount that carried English knights into battle at Crécy and Agincourt, that is perhaps most beloved of the British, lying as it does today at the conjunction of two British passions: the love of ceremonies and the love of animals.

Whitbread owns a team of 17 shire horses which has managed to capture the hearts of the British ceremony buff and of the tourist by providing six shire horses for the Lord Mayor's Show every year since 1955. The company first acquired its team in the early 1950s. The horses have also had something of a functional role, pulling beer carts or drays until 1991, when they were moved from their stables in Garrett Street in the City to Whitbread's 200-acre hop farm in Beltring, Kent, where they are looked after by six full-time stablehands. Whitbread shires are now used almost entirely for ceremonial duties and shows, and are on display to the public at the farm every day between 10am and 4pm.

The shire horse is the heaviest of the draught breeds. It is a handsome and powerful animal which has both enormous stamina and strength, often combined with an unusually placid nature. The ancestors of

today's shires were famed as the great horses of the Middle Ages. They were bred purely for their military value, specifically as charges capable of carrying knights bearing heavy armour and weaponry.

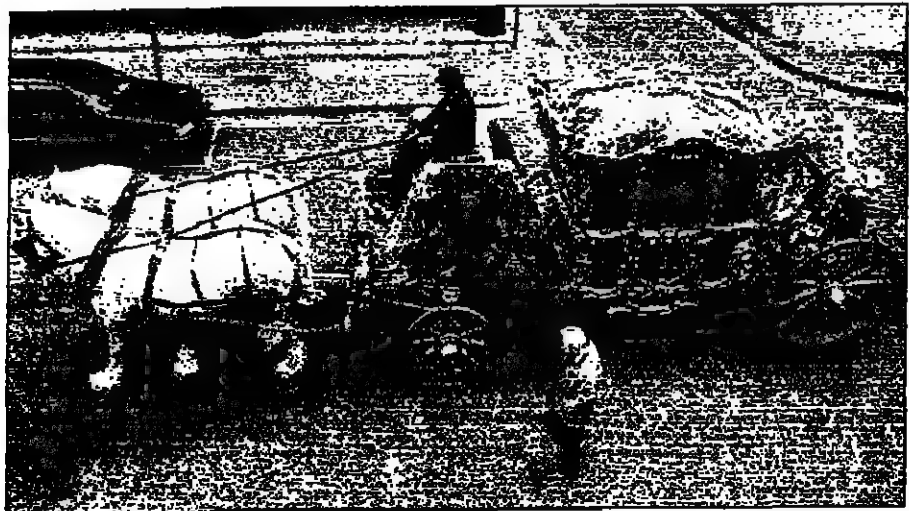
Among the many heavy horse breeds kept for military purposes, it was the Clydesdales in Scotland that gained an edge as one of the strongest breeds after Edward I of England imposed a ban on the export of horses of military value to north of the border, and as a result, the Clydesdale stock was strengthened by horses brought in from Flanders and Denmark.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the English heavy horse stock was likewise boosted again by Flemish horses brought over by Dutch contractors, hired to work on the drainage of the Fenslands.

The shire is an immensely powerful horse of commanding appearance, sometimes as much as 18 hands high (a hand equals four inches) and weighing anything over a tonne. It has thick musculature — unusually broad shoulders and a girth that can run to 24 metres.

Horse buffs describe the typical shire nose as convex Roman, its eyes as kindly and its long mane as well-suited to the copious ribbon plaiting that goes on before a show. But it is perhaps the heavily feathered lower limbs of fine silky white hair that show off their active pace to best advantage and set the hearts of the equine ceremony-lover into a predictable jitter.

Whitbread's team always captures the hearts of the public at the Lord Mayor's Show



Whitbread's team always captures the hearts of the public at the Lord Mayor's Show

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| 60 | £5,242.34 |
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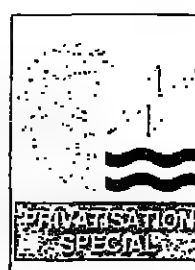
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New earners should start saving now

WEEKEND MONEY

POWER SHARES 36

In the dark about switching off



Grim policy of smaller bonuses

Marianne Curphey on the continuing cuts to annual returns from endowment plans

The 17 million people in the UK who own an endowment policy are being told to brace themselves for bad news when their annual bonuses are announced. More life companies are tipped to follow the trend set by Norwich Union, Scottish Life, Friends Provident and Commercial Union who have cut or frozen bonus rates within the past eight days. Rapid growth in the UK stock market during the 1980s, when annual returns were frequently between 25 and 30 per cent, pushed up yields on policies maturing this year or in the next couple of years. But the lacklustre performance of the stock market in the early 1990s, means policies with a ten or 15-year term taken out within the past five years will struggle to match current yields of about 15 per cent being paid on personal pension policies.

Industry observers say that companies will be unable to sustain high payouts to the end of the decade, and blame life companies for paying "over-generous" bonuses during the

1980s. Some consolation for policyholders is that inflation at 3.1 per cent is lower than it was during the 1980s, and in real terms less capital is being eroded. In 1980, inflation was 18 per cent, and fell steadily to 5 per cent in the mid-1980s before rising to 7.5 per cent at the end of the decade. Norwich Union defended the bonus

ago. He said: "In order to pay the investor 16 per cent net of expenses, life companies need to be making around 18 per cent return. That was relatively easy in the 1980s when returns were a phenomenal 25-30 per cent. Over the last ten years, however, pension funds have returned an average 12.5 per cent, while over five years that figure is nearer 9 per cent. If you started a 15-year policy in 1985, you would have had a few good years in the 1980s, but then some mediocre returns in the early 1990s. I would be surprised if companies make a return of more than 10 per cent over the next five years, and that means payouts will have to come down." He said figures from Commercial Union

| | Term (years) | Payment (£) | Yield (%) | 1995 (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Norwich Union Endowment | 10 | 10,205 | 10.4 | (10.5) |
| Endowment | 15 | 132,970 | 10.9 | (10.4) |
| Scottish Life Endowment | 10 | 9,254 | 8.4 | (8.9) |
| Endowment | 15 | 119,500 | 14.3 | (15.5) |
| Commercial Union Endowment | 10 | 10,292 | 10.4 | (11.4) |
| Endowment | 15 | 111,028 | 13.6 | (14.9) |
| Friends Provident Endowment | 10 | 10,109 | 10.1 | (10.8) |
| Endowment | 15 | 132,213 | 10.9 | (10.7) |

Figures for the with-profits endowment returns based on a male aged 30 next birthday, contributing £20 a month. Pension plan figures assume a male, aged 50 next birthday, contributing £200 gross monthly and planning to retire at 60. 1995 figures in brackets.

freeze, saying with-profits policies were "designed to smooth out these peaks and troughs of volatile investment markets". However, Geoffrey Bernstein, a consulting actuary, gave a warning that the industry would find it increasingly difficult to achieve current 15.6 per cent yields on pension products taken out 20 years

showed terminal bonuses now being paid on products bought on or before 1970 were equivalent to 45 per cent of the sum assured and bonuses, while those bought in 1980 or later, were equivalent to 15 per cent. The table shows yields for policies maturing this year from four companies that have already declared bonuses.



Looking into the future

Under new rules introduced after the pensions mis-selling scandal, life and pension houses are obliged to quote standard projected growth rates to prospective customers (Marianne Curphey writes). This means companies are unlikely to predict the final payout on a policy based on current growth rates and bonuses and which was taken out this year for a ten-year term.

The rules governing life products mean companies can quote returns on growth rates of 5 per cent and 10 per cent, or a middle rate of 7.5 per cent if only one rate is quoted. For pensions, the rates are 6 per cent, 12 per cent or a middle rate of 9 per cent. Under the new rules on disclosure, investors must also be told the charges they will have to pay as a cash figure.

Commercial Union, using a growth rate of 9 per cent, estimates a payout for a with-profits unitised pension for a man aged 50 next birthday, intending to retire in 15 years' time and paying £200 a month would be £62,500 — just over half current payouts. Norwich Union predicts a return of £63,300.

Life assurance policies pay a fixed sum on the death of the insured, or extra bonuses or annuities on retirement.

They mature after a fixed period. A term policy provides life cover for the period specified. Endowment policies provide both life cover and a guaranteed sum on maturity. Two types of bonuses are:
□ Reversionary bonus — also known as annual bonus, is the variable extra amount companies add to with-profits policies and are paid for by extra profits made on investments. Once declared, it cannot be withdrawn. Some are made every couple of years.
□ Terminal bonus — an additional non-guaranteed sum paid at the end of a with-profits life policy or on the insured's death.

Weekend Money is edited by Anne Ashworth

Clear message from Woolwich

In Yorkshire, Peter Robinson, chief executive of the Woolwich Building Society, is not a popular man. Earlier this week, as it became clear that the Woolwich was poised to reveal its flotation plans, the pace of account opening at the society increased twentyfold. More than 70 per cent of this money came from Yorkshire. But none of these new customers will enjoy the society's share bonanza, which will be reserved for those who were members of the society at the end of last year.

Yesterday, the society said that many of the opportunists were already closing their accounts. None has, to date, threatened the society with legal action. The Building Societies Commission said that the Building Societies Act permitted a society to set any merger

or flotation payout qualifying date it pleased.

In his announcement on Thursday, Mr Robinson made it clear that only those qualifying investors and borrowers who were with the Woolwich on December 31, 1995, will receive free shares when the society becomes a bank in 1997. The average payout will be about £1,000.

After his announcement that no "carpetbaggers" would benefit from the flotation largesse, Mr Robinson said that his long-standing members sympathised with his stand. Earlier this week, some were heard to tell newcomers in branch queues that speculators were unwelcome at the Woolwich.

Mr Robinson also points out that the December 31 cut-off date was set with tax-exempt

special savings account (Tessa) holders in mind.

About 25,000 Tessa accounts matured between January 1, and January 10, 1996. Some investors have opted to transfer their Tessa cash to new Tessa accounts with the society but have withdrawn the accumulated interest. Since they had been loyal customers of the society for five years, it would have been unfair to penalise them by using their opening Tessa balance (maximum £9,000) to calculate their share entitlement. This is £3,000 less than the value of their matured Tessa.

The Woolwich share issue will be largely based on the Halifax model. But the Woolwich has not yet decided whether it will raise additional capital on flotation by selling shares to outsiders. Borrowers

and savers will qualify for the Woolwich payout if they have at least £100 in one of the society's share accounts, or £100 outstanding on a mortgage account at December 31, 1995. The account must remain open until the conversion date and the member must also be eligible to vote on the conversion. Certain accounts and products which do not carry membership rights (see page 31) will not qualify.

If you are both a borrower and a saver, you will receive shares in both capacities. Those with more than one account will receive only one payout, although the balances will be added together to determine the total. Those with less than £100 in a qualifying account may receive a statutory cash bonus. Woolwich savers who are

Continued on page 31, col 4

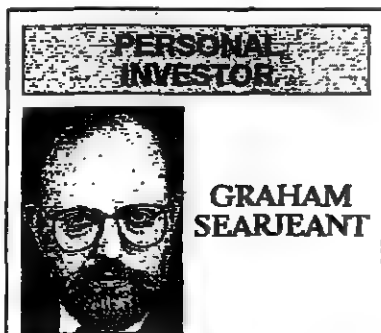
Flotations make a splash

This year promised to be a bumper one for stock market flotations even before the Woolwich declared. That does not mean it will be a great year for private investment in new issues. This year, even bigger flotations need not include a public offer or a placing through private client brokers.

There is something of a pattern to flotations. In 1993, share prices rose strongly. In 1994, the stock market was flooded with issues: up from 163 to a record 218. They raised a doubled £10 billion. But share prices fell through 1994 and the slide was exacerbated by a series of duds, whose early stock market lives served mainly to sour the reputations of investment houses involved.

Overall, newly quoted shares still fared better on average than the indices. But that was not saying much. Institutional investors staged a ragged strike. Not surprisingly, flotations dried up in 1995. Over a year of generally rising share prices, just 85 newcomers raised £2.6 billion. Neil Austin of KMPG Corporate Finance, who compiles these figures, reckons that the buoyant market conditions of 1995 will spawn a fine new crop in 1996, when many companies' profit records have been flattered by several years of recovery.

The new issues market is, however, not the happy hunting ground it was for private investors. Many ambitious company founders used to come to market. They were happy to give investors a discount to earn friends. Cautious profit forecasts, effortlessly beaten, created a good impression for the future when they aimed to go on to bigger things. The



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

pattern is much altered. Building societies are one special case. Millions will earn a windfall from the Halifax, the Woolwich and doubtless the Alliance & Leicester too. But private investors will generally be sellers. 1996 promises two more hefty privatisations. The pricing and fate of British Energy and Railtrack are political. If they proceed, instant gains may be the best, because both face regulatory pressure. A series of communications groups is scheduled, led by Orange, the mobile telephone network, and probably including Eurotunnel and Euro Disney. Many of these will offer jam tomorrow but only projections today. The object is to raise money and put a market value on investments already made by promoters. They want the highest sale price. Private investors, sick of Eurotunnel and Euro Disney, may well leave these to institutions that have more faith in notional arithmetic. In recent years, many flotations have

been the final element of a management buyout or buy-in backed by venture capital houses, which must maximise profits on flotation. These are often popular, because they have had so much top-notch support and the backing house retains a big stake. There have been disasters, such as Barings' MDIS software house and an unhappy trio from Legal & General Ventures.

Shares in the L&G-backed detergent group McBride, floated six months ago, fell off the cliff this week, knocked over by a profit warning. They fell nearly as far as shoe components group Chamberlain Phipps in October. A month earlier, investors who bought Aerostructures Hamble shares at 120p in June 1994 accepted a 32p rescue bid.

D avid Rough, L&G investment boss, is unhappy but argues that these failures have nothing to do with the venture capital process. Chamberlain Phipps and McBride, along with others, proved vulnerable to the unexpected economic slowdown. But such companies are sometimes shed by bigger groups because they are cyclical and have no special growth prospects. Other venture capital houses, such as CINven, claim their babies have outperformed the stock market. A league table, based on two or three-year performance, would be a useful guide.

Meanwhile, private investors no longer wanted at the big boys' table, should stick to the old rules. Back individuals with good original ideas, products or marketing, a decent record, and an unsated hunger to succeed.

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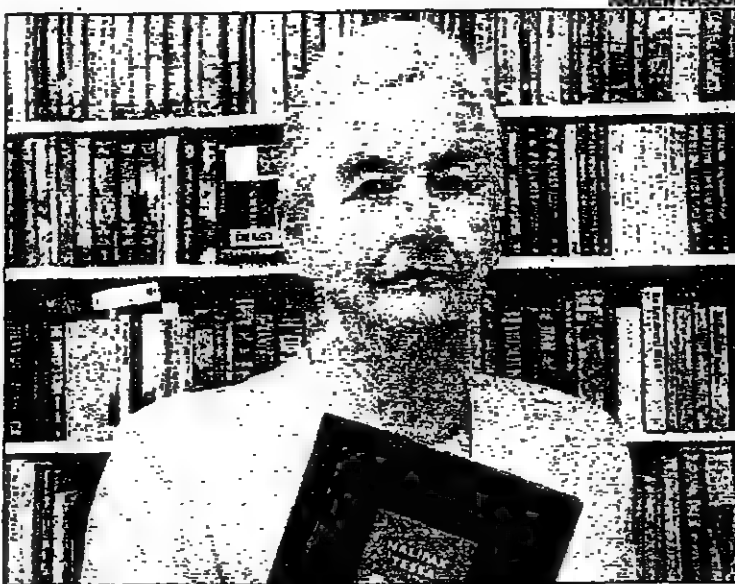
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Caroline Merrell takes a look at disappointing maturity values



Halifax customer Ronald Winskell lost interest on his Tessa because he paid by building society draft



Saver Margaret King did not obtain the maximum maturity value

Tessa shortfall upsets Halifax savers

The Halifax has angered many of its savers by making it almost impossible to achieve the maximum quoted maturity value on its tax exempt special savings account (Tessa). The Times was the first to highlight discrepancies between the amounts promised to savers and the amounts actually received.

Early last month, the society produced a figure of £12,051, as the maturity value for a Tessa, where the £9,000 maximum had been invested.

Later in the month, the society revised the figure, saying that it would pay its one million Tessa savers a maximum of £12,040. There are two explanations for the revision. The first that interest rates fell in the second half of December; the second, that the Halifax had failed to calculate its figures correctly.

This revised amount would still make the Halifax one of the better performing accounts, outstripping many rivals, such as the Bristol & West, Leeds & Holbeck and Yorkshire Building Society.

This week, the Halifax recalculated the maximum maturity for the third time, and came up with a final and hopefully definitive figure of £12,038.37 for the maximum maturity.

Yet, many Times readers who felt they had done everything to ensure they would get the maximum amount from their Halifax Tessa have failed

YOUR INVESTMENT AND THE SOCIETY FLOTATION

HALIFAX Tessa savers will have to take into account the shares they will be eligible for under the terms of the society's flotation, before they decide on where to reinvest the proceeds from their Tessa. The number of shares each member will be eligible for will depend on the amount of money they hold with the Halifax.

Shares will be allocated in two tranches — there will be a basic distribution of shares for those with at least £100 in share accounts, and there will be a variable distribution of shares

based on the total amount held with the Halifax. Shares will be distributed according to a series of narrow bands for those who hold between £1,000 and £50,000 with the society.

The variable distribution will be based on the lower of two balances between November 25, 1994, and the date of a special general meeting to vote on the conversion.

This date has yet to be decided, but could be more than a year ahead. Members will be given several weeks

notice of the meeting, allowing them to top up accounts to their November 25 level to make sure they get the maximum number of shares.

In theory, then, if those with maturing Tessas are not attracted by the Halifax's 5.9 per cent variable rate, or the 7 per cent fixed rate (the rate will actually be fixed on the day the account is opened), they can reinvest their money elsewhere and not lose out on the free shares. But they must maintain an account with the society and top it up before the special meeting to the November 25, 1994 level.

because it was started on January 2. Ronald Winskell, from south London, is another irritated Halifax customer. He started his Tessa on January 3, 1991. He would have received £143 less than the maximum from his maturing Tessa. After reading the article last week he decided to check his maturity.

"I found that they had not paid me the £30 pre-registration bonus," he said. He also found that he had lost interest because he had paid by building society draft. "I transferred funds using a building society's draft from the Chelsea Building Society. The interest would be calculated when funds were cleared, which could have taken a few days."

He added: "It does not say in the literature anywhere about payment in cash. Anyone who lives in south London knows it is not a good idea to walk around with large amounts of money in your pocket."

He said: "I can believe that late cleared funds could mean a shortfall of about £90, but that still leaves £23 unaccounted for."

Mr Winskell is also angry at what he considers to be the low rate of interest offered on the Halifax's new variable rate Tessa, which is 5.9 per cent.

There are much better rates available from elsewhere," he said. "The only reason I am staying with the Halifax is because of the shares I should get from the flotation."

A QUESTION OF MONEY

Will all that glitters in 1996 be gold?

Q Does the recent bounce in the gold price mean that the metal is going to shine in 1996?

A It depends on whom you believe. Salomon Brothers, the US securities house, predicts that the gold price will average \$415 this year, an increase from the 1995 average of \$385. The firm freely admits that it got gold wrong in 1995, having forecast that it would break through the \$400 barrier.

Given gold's failure to perform over the past couple of years, in spite of favourable conditions, including low interest rates, the gold bears may be more persuasive. Andy Smith, gold analyst at Union Bank of Switzerland, finds no simple reason why gold should have risen by \$10 since the beginning of the year, taking the price above \$395 for the first time since April 1995. He believes that even if the metal breaks through the \$400 level, it will still end the year at about \$365.

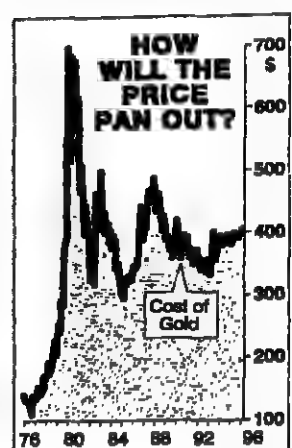
There were some indications in the New York market that the price rise was caused by US funds getting out of bonds and into gold, but there is no firm evidence to prove this. Mr Smith comments: "With gold, there isn't always a reason why."

Q Why, in spite of optimistic forecasts, did gold fail to perform in 1995?

A The various observers take different views. For example, Salomons notes that there was a surge in jewellery demand in the Far East and a decline in gold-mine production, both factors which should have led to a rise in the price of gold.

Golden Ninja Turtle trinkets were all the rage among Saudi Arabian children, while, in Japan, TV pictures of the Kobe earthquake showed a woman discovering her store of gold coins intact amid the ruins. For

Japanese investors this episode underlined gold's unique qualities. But, according to Salomons, forward selling by goldmines acted to depress any buoyancy in the price. The producers agree to sell gold at a price slightly higher than the ruling level for future delivery, so locking in a profit. Mr Smith points out that Japanese demand was only strong in the first quarter of the year, spurred by the earthquake and social disquiet. Thereafter, demand fell to below normal levels.



Q Why should the situation improve this year?

A Salomons claims that the gold market is now in a chronic supply deficit, with mine production and scrap supply falling short of demand. Mr Smith, however, questions the strength of demand, particularly in China, where investors are spurning gold in favour of savings accounts. He also points out that the gold price is not solely determined by supply and demand. Investor sentiment is a more powerful influence on price.

He adds: "Gold may seem to have been resurrected but the feeling that it has still got one foot in the grave is hard to shake."

ANNE ASHWORTH



Return to savers: postal accounts can offer better rates

Posting a profit for the armchair investor

These days you arrange your car insurance, mortgage and personal loans over the telephone and even check your bank balance in the middle of the night. So how about opening an investment account directly with the building society, with the benefit of a better rate of return. Postal accounts offer a higher rate of interest than ordinary building society accounts — basically because that's all they offer.

With such low administration costs, often accompanied by a notice period for withdrawals, societies can offer competitive rates. With postal accounts, as elsewhere, the more money you invest the better the rate of interest. In some cases, the minimum investment is extremely high. Take the Direct 90 postal account launched by the Newcastle Building Society: minimum investment, £100,000.

In return you get 6.9 per cent growth per annum (5.3 per cent net for basic rate taxpayers). Interest can be paid monthly, but at a lower rate of 6.65 per cent (4.99 per cent net). Maximum investment is £300,000 and with-

ANSWERS ON POSTAL ACCOUNTS

Q What is a postal account?
A A building society account where all transactions are conducted by post.

Q How do I open one?
A Telephone the society to request an application form. You will be sent pre-paid envelopes and a pass book.

Q Is there a security risk?

A The societies say not. There are security checks on the account holder's address, where the pass book and cheques would be sent.

Q Do all societies have them?
A Less than a third, including: Birmingham Midshires (0645 720721); Bradford & Bingley (0345 248248); Bristol & West

(0800 303330); Cheltenham & Gloucester (0800 717505); Coventry (0345 665522); Nationwide (0800 665511); Newcastle (0191 244242); Northern Rock (0800 505000); Norwich & Peterborough (01733 391497); Nottingham (0115 948 1444); Scarborough (0800 590578).

Source: Moneyfacts

drawals are subject to 90 days notice or a penalty of the loss of 50 days interest.

Jane Harrison, of the Newcastle, says: "Traditionally people liked to walk through the doors and to do any business face to face. But in the last few years more and more people want to deal by post. People's lifestyles have changed. The industry realises that customers want to

deal by phone or by post and this is one way of responding to that." On Wednesday, Norwich and Peterborough Building Society launches its second postal account, Postal 90. Minimum investment is £5,000 and interest rates range from 5 per cent gross per annum to 6 per cent for balances of £50,000 and over. Withdrawals require 90 days notice, whereas the society's

other postal account PostMaster gives instant access but lower rates. Alison Lipscombe, of the Norwich and Peterborough, says: "We were one of the first to offer a postal account and it has been consistently popular. They appeal particularly to retired people who have substantial amounts of money to invest, but who may not be able to easily get to a branch."

It is worth remembering that the interest rate on offer is variable and, especially these days, could drop. James Higgins, of Chamberlain de Broe, the financial adviser, says: "Products are launched with a splash and a high rate but after a while societies know they can cut that rate and keep a majority of account holders largely through inertia." Building societies are keen to reassure customers that they are still committed to the branch network. But some analysts see it as the thin end of the wedge. Penny O'Nions, of De Havilland, the financial adviser, says: "It does mean smaller branches will disappear."

SARAH JONES

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NAME

NATIONAL SAVINGS

هكذا من الأصل

Playing the Mutual Lottery

The Woolwich's announcement that it is seeking a stock market quote came as something of a relief. Since its plans to convert were an open secret, its coy act was becoming irritating. When it becomes a public company, the Woolwich should remember that being forthright is an attractive quality in a mutual or any other sort of body.

Those who opened Woolwich accounts this month and miss the right to free shares will be arguing that the intentions should have been clearer sooner. This is certainly true. Some will also object to being called "carpetbaggers", perhaps an unfair way to describe those wishing to join Britain's second-favourite gamble, the Mutual Lottery. However, Peter Robinson, the Woolwich's chief executive, acted properly to protect the interests of the society's long-term savers, who are infinitely more numerous and deserving.

The 3.5 million Woolwich members who will benefit will be overjoyed to



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

find that they will be, on average, £1,000 richer by September 1997, the proposed date for the flotation.

However, it now seems possible that they may not need to wait that long for their windfall. The Woolwich — always seen as a predator, seeking out other tasty mutuals — could now become prey. Europhobe Woolwich stalwarts may not like the idea of their society being bought by some continental institution, a widely predicted move. Such scruples will vanish at the sight of the cash. After all, National & Provincial members should be picking up their cash this summer, only a year after the takeover deal for their society was made public.

The Woolwich directors' decision to exclude all those who opened an account after December 31 1995 should be good news for their counterparts at the Alliance & Leicester. The £1,000 now needed to open an A&L Tessa, or the £5,000 for a Bonus 90 or Bonus 180 account is already deterring the "carpetbaggers" (not my phrase, you understand).

Any "carpetbaggers" will be further discouraged by the thought that the A&L may also impose a cut-off date, giving it more time to settle differences of opinion among its bosses, and to finalise flotation details. Confirmation that the Woolwich had finally decided to relinquish its mutual status came in hints made to customers in its branches earlier this week. Anyone contemplating transferring the proceeds of a matured Tessa to a competing society was told that they might be kissing goodbye to a payout.

Those with Tessas from the Britannia, the Bristol & West, the Northern Rock and the Skipton should also ponder the wisdom of taking their cash elsewhere. The extra bit of interest earned in a competitor's account will not be equal to the flotation or merger bounty you could collect if these four abandon mutuality.

Fortunately, there is, to date, no confusion over the maturity values of these societies' Tessas. As we report on page 30, such has been the anticipation over the final figure for a Halifax Tessa that a few investors have threatened not to open new accounts with the society, so forgoing a four-digit sum in free shares. No better example will emerge this year of cutting off your nose to spite your face.

Left out in the cold by travel insurance

It was the worst snowstorm in 48 years, blanketing the US east coast from Virginia to Massachusetts in up to four feet of snow, and I was stuck in New York. "At least I'll be able to move off your sofa and into a hotel," I told my friends as we watched the skiers on Broadway. After all, I had taken out travel insurance and knew there was a "delay" clause for just such an emergency. But like many others I discovered that my Bradford & Bingley plan did not cover it.

It wasn't easy, or cheap, to find out how little cover I had. The annual multi-trip travel insurance booklet does have a freephone number for the US, but it is primarily for emergency medical assistance. In order to find out if the £600 accommodation limit for travel delay would apply, I had to call the UK.

It was early evening UK-time when I rang the 24-hour assistance line and was told that, as my question was not about a medical emergency, I would have to ring Guardian Insurance in the morning. The next day I rang Guardian and was put on hold twice before being told that I had to call another number. Again, my long-distance call was put on hold twice. Eventually I was told: "We're not liable for weather. All you can claim is travel delay. The hotel is down to the airline."

Bradford & Bingley's policy will pay £20 after the first 12 hours' delay and an additional



Rich Gordon shovels snow off the roof of his home

£10 for each subsequent 12 hours up to a maximum of £100. By my calculations, my four-day delay will yield compensation of £80. This will help with the unexpected cost of eating out for four days, but it would barely make a dent in the cost of four nights in an hotel in a city where a room for under £100-a-night is considered a bargain.

Bradford & Bingley will pay up to £600 in accommodation for travellers who cannot return home, but only as the result of a scheduled public service breakdown or an accident or mechanical failure to a car in which you are travelling which prevents you getting to the airport. Although public transport had ground to a halt, Bradford & Bingley said the extra compensation did not apply. There was little comfort from American Airlines, who said, "If we had cancelled the flight through mechanical failure we would pay for an hotel but the weather is out of our control." Luckily, I had friends in the city; others did not.

KAREN ZAGOR
in New York

Speculators receive clear message

Continued from page 29
under 18 will not get shares, as the law does not allow them to take part in the flotation vote. But they will get the cash bonus, the amount they receive being based on a percentage of their account balance, not at December 31, 1995, but at a date yet to be determined. To prevent parents paying large amounts into their offspring's accounts, the Woolwich has ruled that the balance in a child's account can now only be increased by a maximum of £1,000, excluding interest.

The society is determined to learn the lesson of the Abbey National who gave children 4 per cent of their balances, without limit. Parents took full advantage to fill their children's accounts to the brim.

The Woolwich will be making a basic and an additional variable distribution of shares. Only those who have been investing members for two years will qualify for the variable distribution.

The amount of variable distribution shares savers will receive is to be based on the lower balance in their accounts on December 31, 1995 and at least one other date, yet to be determined.

Accounts and products which do not qualify: Deposit accounts, including Time Deposits, Current Account, all unit trust products, including Peps, all life products, including Guaranteed Income Account/Bond, all Woolwich Guernsey Accounts, personal unsecured loans, all general insurance products. Woolwich information line 0345 022033.

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Those with a head for the market are divided, some throwing their hats in with the bears, others with the bulls

Waiting for gilts to deal good hand

Last year was something of a bonanza for investors in government securities. Five-year gilts showed a return of about 13 per cent, ten-year gilts about 17 per cent, and longer-dated gilt returns hit the 19 per cent mark.

The returns for investors in 1995 contrasted dramatically with those in the previous year, which was a particularly bad 12 months for the gilts market.

In January last year, most commentators managed to predict correctly that gilts would rally strongly. No such consensus exists on the prospects for this year.

Stephen Lewis, director of research at London Bond Broking, said the big returns experienced by gilt investors last year were unlikely to be repeated because of the proximity of the general election. He said: "At the beginning of last year, the market expected robust growth, with inflationary pressure, and interest rates were expected to rise. In fact the opposite happened, economic growth slowed down and interest rates fell."

Mr Lewis believes this year

will be a much riskier one for investors. The latest figures from retailers point to some recovery in consumer demand, which could lead to an increase in inflationary pressure and interest rates, he said. "The uncertainty about Labour fiscal policy could also make it a very difficult year."

However, he thinks short-dated gilts, maturing in two to three years' time, could be good for savers. "They are yielding about 6.64 per cent, which is much better than many deposit rates," he added.

Theodore Zemek, fixed-interest manager at fund manager M&G, believes the current rally in the gilts market will continue over the next year. She said: "The bulk of the

rally in the market came at the end of last year. A general election will make some difference, but there has been a gradual appreciation in the City that new Labour is not quite the disaster it was the last time round."

Her tip for this year is that long-dated gilts will show total returns of 12 to 14 per cent, on the back of falls in interest rates. Justin Urquhart, managing director of Barclays stockbrokers, takes the opposite view: "The market is just too risky. We are not at all bullish about the immediate future in the gilts market."

Eric Halthorn, a director of stockbroker Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "Just looking at the fundamentals, there may be further cuts in interest rates. The gilt market should respond favourably."

He thinks the political uncertainty has been overdone, and a Labour Government would not prove to be disastrous in terms of inflation and, therefore, interest rates.

CAROLINE MERRELL

Strips market in place

FROM the beginning of next year, a new type of security based on gilts will be available to private and institutional investors alike (Caroline Merrell writes).

By the start of 1997, the Government is aiming to put in place the regulations necessary to create a "strips" market.

Creating a strips market, as the name implies, involves breaking up a gilt into its two component parts - the capital, or "principal", and the income, or "coupon".

Gilts pay a fixed guaranteed income, and guarantee to repay the capital at maturity. Investors in the strips market will pay a price today for the guaranteed income, or for the guaranteed capital which will be paid in the form of a lump sum at some point in the future.

The guarantees make the strips market ideal for those who know they have a liability in the future, eg. school fees or a mortgage.

The delay in setting up a strips market was caused by a dispute about whether investors should pay tax on the stripped income.

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هكذا من الأصل



After graduation, students are to be encouraged to save as soon as they find a job. They can pay into a Personal Social Fund from their first day at work

New earners can save for their future

The Government is considering a radical plan to encourage first-time earners to save for their future. Under the scheme, graduates would start paying into a Personal Social Fund from their first day at work.

To steer graduates away from welfare dependency, tax breaks would be among the incentives on offer. Savers would be able to access their money at any time in their career. Tony Baker, of the Association of British Insurers, said: "Financial services only look at the top third of the population. We want to extend that downwards. People living at home may have a lot of disposable income at this stage. Why shouldn't they be encouraged to save?"

Certainly, the average starting salary is impressive, at £14,562 last year, up 6 per cent on 1994, according to the Association of Graduate Re-

cruiters. It forecasts that this figure will rise to £15,000 next year.

Starting salaries among City-based graduates are even higher. Employees of multinational companies are earning as much as £25,500 in their first year, according to Guy James, graduate manager at Barclays in London's Square Mile. He says half of first-time earners will start saving before they reach their second year. The more sophisticated will invest in a fixed rate bond.

Graduates fortunate enough to have found work, who have repaid their university debts, usually start saving six months into their new career, according to Lloyds Bank. To help first-time earners to make the most of their salary *Weekend Money* has asked a panel of IFAs to offer their advice.

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JOHN EATON, Lupton Fawcett: "I would suggest opening a building society account with reasonable access for liquid funds and a general cash reserve such as Yorkshire's First Class Access postal account. You might also consider opening an interest paying current account such as the Woolwich Cheque Account. Open a flexible Tessa with one of the smaller societies who offer competitive rates and low minimum payments."

JAMES HIGGINS, Chamberlain De Broc: "If you're going to purchase a house within three years of employment, forget any long-term, insurance or equity-related arrangements. A postal account will be more appropriate, perhaps C&G or Northern Rock. Avoid endowments which are simply expensive insurance-linked savings plans. If that sort of saving is desired, try regular contributions into an investment trust."

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BRIAN CONNELL, Grant Thornton: "I would first recommend a monthly saving to a bank or building society to provide an emergency fund equivalent to three months' earnings in case the job doesn't reach expectations. If property purchase is contemplated, a deposit of around 5 per cent of the purchase price may be required. This could also be built up in cash through through building society savings. If a five-year time span is envisaged, use a tax-efficient Tessa to set funds aside as untouched capital."

PHILIPPA GEE, Gee & Company: "Shop around for a good bank or building society account, like C&G, which offers preferential savings or mortgage rates to customers. Work out the level of monthly savings you feel can be spared, and set up a standing order for that amount to a high-interest postal account, like Scottish Widows. Only start providing for a pension when you're sure that you're not extending yourself. Look for a contract that gives payment flexibility and low charges, as well as competitive performance. If you're looking to buy a house, try to save a large deposit, as all lenders, except C&G, charge an indemnity premium if your mortgage is more than 75 per cent of the value of your property."

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of time-consuming and unsatisfactory regulation of pensions

When the going gets slow

The hopes of hundreds of thousands of people seeking compensation for bad pensions advice were boosted this week when the High Court threw out pleas from five pension providers to stay legal actions brought by six victims of mis-selling. The six can now go on to fight for compensation through the courts, bypassing the industry's slow moving review of pension mis-selling.

The providers, which included the Prudential, GAN Life, TSB Life, Hill Samuel Life and Irish Life, had argued that the six should wait for the review, ordered last year by the chief City watchdog, the Securities and Investments Board, rather than going to court. They had given warning that the courts would be flooded with claims if the six were allowed to proceed.

Their pleas were turned down by the court, which argued that it would not be in the industry's interests to drag out the review. Most people would be dealt with through the review rather than the courts, said Judge Raymond Jack. Regulators insist they have designed the review so that investors do not have to go to court.

But there is growing concern over the slow progress of the review. The first compensation to the most pressing cases were due last month. But SIB and the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), which regulates most pension providers, were forced to admit this week that only a handful of people have so far received compensation. A few cases have been individually settled.

The review was set up after an SIB-commissioned report uncovered widespread evidence of mis-selling of personal pensions at the end of 1993.

So if the review is taking so long, should you go to court instead if you think you have been wrongly advised? Or should you hold on and wait for your pension provider to review your file? We answer some of the questions you may need to ask yourself before deciding on your strategy.

Q Why is the review taking so long?

A Pension providers are blaming the PIA, for the



Long time in the waiting room

It is more than 18 months since the Prudential contacted Tracey Glester to update her on the progress of her claim for compensation for bad pensions advice. Her solicitor has had to threaten court action to get the Pru to release information Mrs Glester needs to pursue her claim. A meeting with the Pru was abandoned when the company could not agree a venue or to pay for

Mrs Glester's solicitor. She says: "This is all typical of their attitude. If I didn't know better, I would have said they were a cowboy outfit." A Prudential salesman persuaded Mrs Glester, a nurse, to opt out of her generous National Health Service pension and take out a personal one. Now, like hundreds of thousands of others, she is pinning all her hopes on the pension review for compensation.

time it took to issue guidelines for sending out questionnaires to possible victims, reviewing their files and paying compensation. They say they could not commission software to handle the administrative task of tracking down victims until the PIA published its guidelines, which it did not do until August 1995. Some of them also blame earlier legal action by independent financial advisers, who have until now refused to co-operate with the review on the ground that they would invalidate their professional indemnity insurance if they contacted customers, effectively admitting they were at fault.

Q But aren't all these just excuses for not having to pay compensation?

A There is certainly an element of that. But as Judge Jack pointed out, the industry has already earned

WEEKEND MONEY GUIDE

itself such a bad name over the whole mis-selling debacle that it would be suicidal for it to delay compensation without good reason.

Q Yes, but I've been waiting for more than two years. When are they going to start?

A All companies should by now have sent out questionnaires to people considered by the regulators to be priority cases. These include those already retired or dependants of someone who has died, those who left their present employer's scheme aged 35 or over and are still working for that employer,

and those who transferred funds from a previous employer's scheme into a personal pension aged over 55 for men or over 50 for women. The deadline for reviewing your case was meant to be December 31, 1995, but this has slipped.

Q I'm a priority case but I haven't heard anything. What should I do?

A You should contact the company which sold you the pension if you were sold it by one of the company's own salesmen. But things are more complicated if you went through an independent financial adviser, because of their argument that they would be inviting invalidation of their professional indemnity insurance if they contacted you.

This week, the issue was resolved. The PIA says that those concerned should con-

tact the adviser. In that way, the adviser is reacting to your request.

Q But why isn't anyone forcing these people to contact me? Surely these delays are unacceptable?

A The PIA agrees that it is "slightly disappointing" that the first deadline was missed but adds: "We only ever said firms should use their best endeavours." It says it will be demanding quarterly returns from all its members showing what progress they are making in dealing with the problem. The first returns are due this Monday. Firms not deemed to be making sufficient effort could face disciplinary action.

Q I'm not a priority case but I want to get this sorted out. What do I do?

A You have to contact the company concerned. Once you've done this, the company is obliged by the PIA to check your file.

Q Would it be quicker if I went to court instead?

A It may not be quicker. It may cost you money if you do not qualify for legal aid and are not supported by a trade union. But if you took out a personal pension more than six years ago or are not a priority case, you may be better off going to court. This is because you only have six years from when you were sold the pension to make a claim. If you bought your pension more than six years ago, you still have up to three years to claim from when you could reasonably be expected to know there was a problem. Most people first found out in December 1993 when news of the damning SIB commissioned report was published, giving them at least until the end of this year. If you fear you could be out of time on either of the limits (particularly likely if you are not a priority case), you should take out a protective writ against the pension provider. The writ has the effect of stopping the clock, allowing you to take court action after the limitation time has expired. Complaining through the review system does not in itself stop the clock.

If the State can't provide financial security, shouldn't you make a Resolution to keep something up your sleeve?



Taking steps to secure your financial future is probably the last thing on your mind as you ring in the New Year.

Trouble is, with less and less State money for welfare demands like pensions and support during illness, you really can't afford to put it off.

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From Wednesday investors in National Power and PowerGen, the privatised power generators, will be receiving reminders that the second payments on their part-paid shares are due.

With National Power shares below last March's 170p first instalment, and PowerGen showing only a modest premium on its 185p launch price, investors may be wondering what to do. Here we answer some of the questions you need to ask.

Q What do I have to pay and by when?

A Shareholders in PowerGen will have to pay a second instalment of 185p by February 6 with the third and final instalment of 142p due by September 17, 1996. For National Power investors the second instalment is 170p by February 6 and 136p in September. If you opted for the

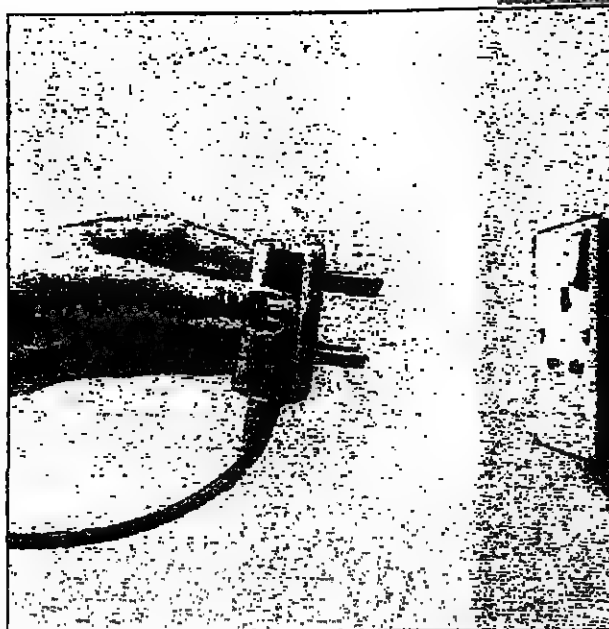
Power on in the dark or switch off early?

discount package offered when you first applied for the shares, the price you pay will be adjusted accordingly.

Q Why have the part-paid shares done less well than expected since flotation?

A At present levels, neither the part-paid price of PowerGen, nor of National Power, would seem to give shareholders much to cheer about. Having hit a peak in 1995 of 290p for PowerGen and 271p for National Power, both shares came crashing down after the electricity regulator's surprise review of the sector last summer. Since then, despite a brief rally in November, both shares have been on the slide. Dampening both part paid and fully paid shares is the referral of each of the groups' bids for regional electricity companies to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

PowerGen is at present bidding £1.9 billion for Midlands Electricity, while National Power is offering £2.8 billion for Southern Electric. The MMC's report on both bids will not be completed until March 22 when it is then given to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, for a final



decision. City analysts expect a green light.

Q Should I hang on to the shares or sell?

A Hang on, say analysts and advisers. Both PowerGen and National Power have taken a battering but they promise solid returns. "In the longer term you are buying into the dominant players

moved out of the line of fire. However, the spectre of a windfall tax on the profits of the utilities remains, but if implemented, this is likely to hit water and regional electricity companies hardest. Power generators are already operating in a competitive market and it is expected they would have less to fear.

Q If I do want to sell can I do so before the second payment is due?

A From Wednesday shareholders will receive notice of the second payment due. This "call notice" is a key document if you want to sell your shares. Between January 17 and 20 you can take the notice to an accepting broker to sell the shares. Most big brokers, including high street banks, building societies and telephone dealing services, will be accepting part-paid shares. You may find small brokers will not take them, so it is important to check in advance to avoid missing the January 20 sell-by deadline.

Q Where can I get further advice?

A Two hotlines have been set up. Both operate from Monday to normal working hours. For questions on PowerGen shares call 0117 976 3005, while for National Power call 01903 503 733.

Q What happens if I miss the deadline?

A If you neither sell your shares nor pay the second instalment due on February 6, you forfeit your shares.

This means they are repossessed by the Government via The Treasury, which subsequently sells them in the market. You get this price less a deduction to cover the costs of administration.

Q How have PowerGen and National Power fully paid shares performed?

A They have risen 189 per cent for PowerGen and 150 per cent for National Power. On dividend performance, they are among the top performers.

In the UK generating market," said Ian Graham, an analyst at NatWest Securities. Justin Urquhart-Stewart of Barclays Stockbrokers said both offer good dividend growth: "Stick with them." Part-paid shares in Peps should also be held and people who opted for bonus shares should stay in as these will be issued only after the shares have been held for three years. The expected MMC go-ahead for each of



Such a move is likely to beef up the share price further.

Q If Labour wins the next election what will happen to privatised utilities?

A With Labour's move away from renationalising pledges, utilities have

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Karen Zagor on Wall Street's technology-led fall

Decline that need not be terminal

Nerves of steel and a cast-iron stomach are essential when investing in US technology stocks, as anyone who has weathered the latest lurch on Wall Street will have discovered.

The technology sector has been driving the overall US stock market up and down for a year. In 1995, the stellar performance of technology stocks in the first six months helped to propel the Dow Jones industrial average to record levels. But on Tuesday, it tumbled 67.55 points to 5,130.13 in a decline that was triggered by losses in the technology sector. The Nasdaq Composite Index, which is heavily weighted towards technology stocks, dropped 33.55 points to 998.82. Many technology shares fell even further on Wednesday, before the sector started to stage a recovery on Thursday.

This week's decline was sparked both by a number of factors including a negative report on technology stocks by a leading analyst and disappointing profit news from a number of companies. And sales of Windows 95, the

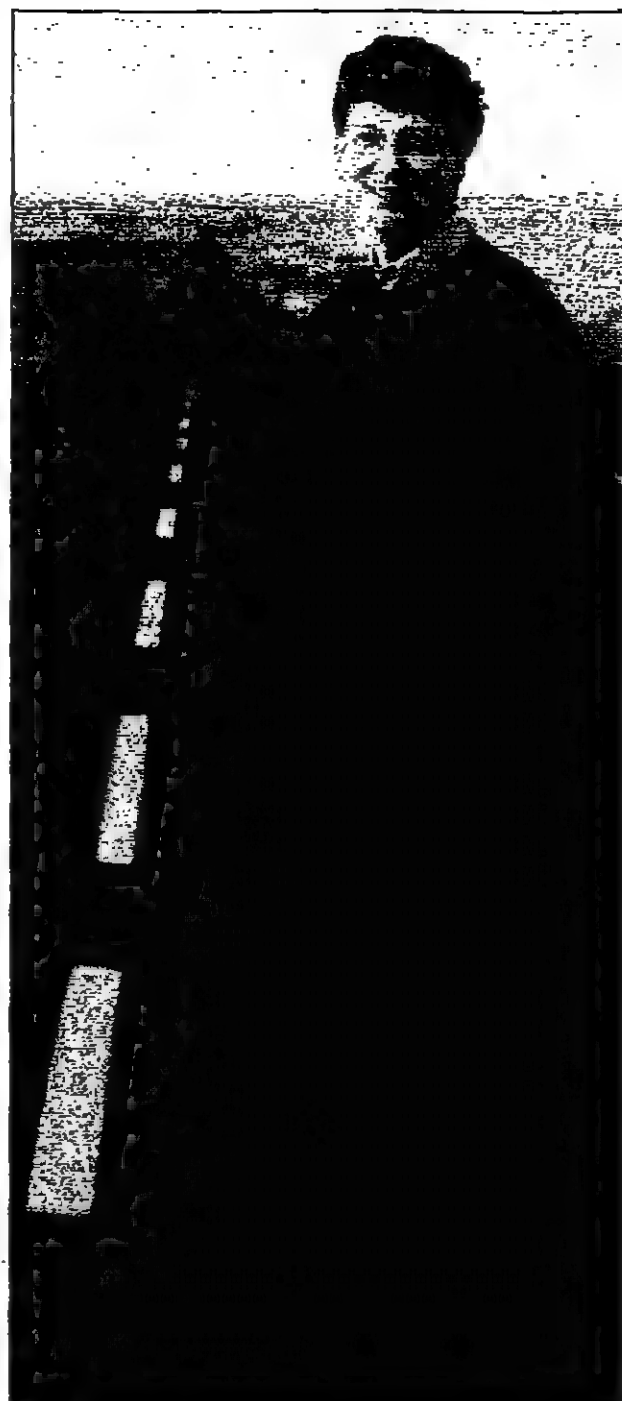
Microsoft operating system for personal computers that was launched last summer, were not as high as some expected. The erosion continued through the week after Motorola, a giant cellular telephone company, posted disappointing fourth quarter earnings.

Ed Yardeni, chief economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell in New York, said: "The technology sector is generally volatile and stocks have been annihilated this week. There's probably room for some intelligent stock-picking now, but prices may fall even further. It's an industry where the most sophisticated gadgets can become commodities in a very short space of time, so pricing is very difficult for these stocks. In general, the sector is treacherous and investors should be careful not to overweight technology stocks in their portfolios."

Yet there are strong reasons why these stocks appeal to risk-minded investors. The presence of computer technology in daily life is growing. Computers are no longer con-

fined to offices. More and more homes have personal computers. Computer chips can be found in everything from aircraft instruments to coffee makers. As long as the technology continues to evolve, investors who spot a new company with a winning product stand to make a fortune. For example, anyone who bought into the California Internet software company Netscape Communications when it went public last August is still looking at large profits. The offering was priced at \$28 and quickly soared to a high of \$174 last year. On Tuesday, the shares fell to \$129.22, down \$8.22 on the day, but significantly higher than their IPO level.

Analysts are still debating whether technology companies are cyclical or not. The latest technology sell-off was widely seen as a market correction for a sector that had become overpriced rather than a shift in the fundamental outlook for the industry. Technology share prices are likely to remain volatile as long as share prices reflect sentiment instead of financial performance.



The road ahead could take a few turns for Bill Gates, the head of Microsoft. Some believe sales of his company's Windows 95 operating systems are not as high as they could be.

PERSONAL COMPUTER COMPANIES

THERE was a time when Apple Computer could do no wrong. Its personal computers were considered superior to anything the IBM-compatible computer companies could produce. But now Microsoft has come out with Windows 95, a software programme which allows IBM-compatible machines to match many of Apple's features. As a result, Apple's future is less certain. Analysts say the company has not responded quickly enough to the Microsoft challenge, and there has been concern about the company's management. IBM is still trying to prove that it can effect a turnaround after its breathtaking losses of 1993. In 1994, the company posted its first annual profit since 1990. Compaq Computer is now the leading US personal computer maker, although its market share recently slipped slightly to 12 per cent from 13 per cent. Other US big computer companies include Hewlett-Packard, Dell and Gateway 2000.

SOFTWARE

MICROSOFT dominates the software sector. Its presence is so overwhelming that smaller companies can only thrive by finding a niche where they do not come head-to-head with Microsoft. Microsoft is trying to stave off the threat of competition in the Internet software market. Rivals include Broderbund, maker of education programmes, Oracle and Sun Microsystems.

INTERNET

AS the stock market performance of Netscape shares indicates, the Internet is believed to be the way of the future. The Internet is a global computer network that can be used for research and low-cost communications. It is accessible to anyone with a PC and a phone connection, and companies that make the software and hardware to access the net are expected to flourish. The biggest challenge to Intel and Microsoft is expected to come from the Internet sector. On the software side, Netscape's worldwide web browser remains the software of choice, although it is now being challenged by Microsoft. Sun Microsystems is the main supplier of Internet server computers.

SEMICONDUCTOR SECTOR

SEMICONDUCTORS are the chips that make computers run. They include memory chips, such as D-Rams (Dynamic Random Access Memory), which are responsible for the computer's memory, and microprocessors, which are often called "brain" chips because they allow the computer to figure out what it must do.

In the world of technology stocks, the semiconductor sector has been the most volatile. Semiconductors can be found wherever computer technology exists. And the scope for expansion is enormous. For the moment, the biggest outlet for semiconductor sales is the personal computer market, so the fortunes of semiconductor companies are largely determined by the sales performance of the computer companies they are selling their chips to. But a semiconductor company's financial performance is also determined by the quality of its chips, its ability to market its products and the number of competitors producing similar products.

The D-Ram market posted a dramatic rise last year, with a 40 per cent increase in the worldwide market, according to figures from Dataquest, the US market research company. Sales are expected to rise another 29 per cent next year. Intel is the world's largest supplier of microprocessors to the personal computer industry and its Pentium chip is now the leading microprocessor on the market. Other big semiconductor companies include Texas Instruments, Cirrus Logic, Advanced Micro Devices, National Semiconductor and LSI Logic.

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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Pre-authorisation not acceptable

From Mr D. Brookes
Sir, I was pleased to read the article by Marianne Curphey on January 6, regarding William Vidal's experience of pre-authorisation of credit cards. I can now appreciate that I am not alone in refusing to allow pre-authorisation on my card.

I use hotels on average 30 nights per year and over the past 18 months the practice of asking for pre-authorisation has become increasingly common, and in some cases increasingly aggressive. Even a hotel that I have used more than 100 times in the past three years recently asked me for a pre-authorisation.

In refusing to allow clerks to take a blank of your card, you are treated like a pariah. You are firmly told this is "company policy" or "company policy". The implication is always that it is you who are untrustworthy and if you point out that it is not your company policy to allow anyone to have free access to your



credit card, it is made clear that the hotel policy is more important than yours.

Over the past 12 months in particular, I have felt increasingly isolated at hotel reception desks when checking in. I have been subjected to cross-examinations by reception staff, been made to wait for the manager and watched other customers dealt with ahead of

me while I was waiting. On one occasion last year I adopted Mr Vidal's approach and agreed to pay for the room in advance, but the manager then pointedly told the receptionist that I could have no further credit at the hotel during my stay. I took all my meals, including breakfast, elsewhere in the town and used none of the facilities at

the hotel. Credit card companies appear to condone this practice in spite of warning cardholders never to let their card out of sight and to ensure that blank vouchers are destroyed.

In my case, my credit card company (Girobank Visa) supported the hotel, suggesting that a dispute was unlikely and in any event the credit card powers which allow us to resolve any disputes between hotel and cardholder.

Pre-authorisation appears to be becoming a situation in which the individual cannot be right and where the old courtesies extended to the customer are being eroded.

Like Mr Vidal I will continue to object to this practice and perhaps next time I object I will get some support from other customers as they check-in in front of me while I am patiently waiting to see the manager.
Yours faithfully,
DAVE BROOKES,
31 Andrews Way,
Salisbury,
Wiltshire.

Red herrings in the water industry debate

From Mr R. Rench
Sir, Mr Bill Beckwith (Weekend Money Letters, January 6) contends that without privatisation the water industry was incapable of raising the billions necessary to make good previous under-investment. Not at all: that assertion, as subsequent events have established and confirmed beyond doubt, was a government-generated myth.

Apart from insignificant amounts produced by shareholders opting for shares in lieu of dividends, the whole of the industry's extensive capital programme has been funded by borrowing and by substantial increases in charges on the captive consumers.

Precisely the same course could have been followed had the water services remained in public hands. And, moreover, it would have been without having to incur the costs of grossly inflated pay and "perks" for executives, dividends for shareholders, a regulatory system and other overheads.

As Scotland has clearly demonstrated, it did not re-

quire privatisation to achieve improvements in environmental standards to which Mr Beckwith has referred. The answer lay solely in having the freedom to raise funds in the manner employed for decades by public authorities prior to being subjected to the "red herring" constraint of the ESBR.

Yours sincerely,
ROLAND RENCH,
8 Minshall Place,
Park Road,
Beckenham,
Kent.

Case for splitting pensions on divorce

From Mrs G. Widdison
Sir, I agree with the sentiments expressed in Olga Wikeley's letter (December 30). Thousands of women can expect to receive little or no state pension and can also expect a poor deal if they divorce.

The provisions of the Pensions Act, albeit flawed, have done something to remedy this situation. However, the legislation will now come into effect in July 1996, instead of April, as originally proposed. During the intervening

month, there will be as many as 40,000 divorces. The delay will mean that these wives will not be able to take advantage of the concessions in the Act.

I am a member of Fairshares, a national group which is lobbying hard for the splitting of pensions on divorce. We contend that this is a fairer and more rational solution than the division of the husband's pension on retirement, as outlined in the Pensions Act. Postponing the split until retirement is a policy which will create poverty in old age and dependence on the State for many women.

There is still time to resolve this issue by amending the Family Law Bill to give the wife who has devoted herself to home and family a fair share of her husband's pension. I was myself married for close to 37 years, during which time I raised three children and supported my husband's career at the expense of my own.
Yours faithfully,
GILL WIDDISON,
49 Shrubbery Road,
Gravesend, Kent.

When the bank 'cashes in' over charges

From Mr D. Law
Sir, I read your article "Uncle, they shrunk my present" in *The Times* (December 23). I recently wrote a cheque for £420 on my Canadian bank account, which, when cashed by the recipient, netted him £370.11 - £49.89 having been deducted in bank charges by the National Westminster Bank. I have written in vain to the manager and to customer services in Bath and wonder

who else I could write and complain to.

I am told that foreign banks agents' charges totalled £30.29 and the Nat West charges were £19.60. I feel these charges are exorbitant for processing one cheque but nobody else seems to agree.
Yours sincerely,
DAVID LAW,
42 Station Road,
Chiseldon,
Wiltshire.

Pep plan to pay off your home loan

THE Halifax, the UK's biggest building society, has become the first high street lender to offer routinely a personal equity plan (Pep) as a method of repaying a mortgage.

The move is an acknowledgement that endowments are no longer acceptable by the public as suitable for repaying mortgages. They have been strongly criticised for carrying too high charges, for failing to produce the returns necessary to pay off the loan, and for returning little or no money to investors, if surrendered early. The Halifax denied it was pulling out of selling endowments altogether. Mike Blackburn, chief executive, said: "While Tax Free Home Plan will be our flagship mortgage repayment plan, we will continue to offer and recommend repayment and endowment-based mortgages where they are more suitable for customers."

The Pep part of the loan will be provided by Halifax Life, a subsidiary of the society. It will be based on one unit trust run by the life company,



The Halifax will still offer endowments, says Mike Blackburn

which has been going for one year. Anyone who takes out a Pep mortgage of any sort has to take out level term assurance, to ensure their mortgage is paid off if they die. The Halifax is packaging this life cover together with the Pep. The combined product carries a 7.5 per cent initial charge and a 0.5 per cent annual charge.

According to the Halifax, the monthly repayments for a £50,000 mortgage over 25 years would be £364.62. Of this, £284 would be the interest on the

loan and £80.62 would be the Pep and life cover contributions combined. A Pep mortgage also gives investors the possibility of benefiting from a tax-free sum after the mortgage has been paid off. Many financial advisers believe that Peps are one of the most tax-efficient ways of saving to pay off the loan, but they caution that they are not guaranteed. A sudden fall in the stock market could leave borrowers short of the sum they need.

CAROLINE MERRELL

A guide through the maze

CHASE de Vere, the independent financial adviser, this week published its 14th Pep guide.

The guide contains details of all 1,190 Peps available, including the new corporate bond Peps which were launched in the middle of last year.

As well as giving specific details about each Pep on the market, the 204-page guide also gives a brief history of Peps and lists some tips on achieving maximum returns.

Chase de Vere points out that about 116 corporate bond Peps have been launched this year, many of which offer rates that are better than building society and bank deposit rates.

Chase de Vere also offers six monthly performance charts to accompany the publication. The guide costs £12.95, and the performance charts cost £2. More information on 0800 526091.

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| 2566 | 2567 | 2568 | 2569 | 2570 | 2571 | 2572 | 2573 | 2574 | 2575 | 2576 | 2577 | 2578 | 2579 | 2580 | 2581 | 2582 | 2583 | 2584 | 2585 | 2586 | 2587 | 2588 | 2589 | 2590 | 2591 | 2592 | 2593 | 2594 | 2595 | 2596 | 2597 | 2598 | 2599 | 2600 | 2601 | 2602 | 2603 | 2604 | 2605 | 2606 | 2607 | 2608 | 2609 | 2610 | 2611 | 2612 | 2613 | 2614 | 2615 | 2616 | 2617 | 2618 | 2619 | 2620 | 2621 | 2622 | 2623 | 2624 | 2625 | 2626 | 2627 | 2628 | 2629 | 2630 | 2631 | 2632 | 2633 | 2634 | 2635 | 2636 | 2637 | 2638 | 2639 | 2640 | 2641 | 2642 | 2643 | 2644 | 2645 | 2646 | 2647 | 2648 | 2649 | 2650 | 2651 | 2652 | 2653 | 2654 | 2655 | 2656 | 2657 | 2658 | 2659 | 2660 | 2661 | 2662 | 2663 | 2664 | 2665 | 2666 | 2667 | 2668 | 2669 | 2670 | 2671 | 2672 | 2673 | 2674 | 2675 | 2676 | 2677 | 2678 | 2679 | 2680 | 2681 | 2682 | 2683 | 2684 | 2685 | 2686 | 2687 | 2688 | 2689 | 2690 | 2691 | 2692 | 2693 | 2694 | 2695 | 2696 | 2697 | 2698 | 2699 | 2700 | 2701 | 2702 | 2703 | 2704 | 2705 | 2706 | 2707 | 2708 | 2709 | 2710 | 2711 | 2712 | 2713 | 2714 | 2715 | 2716 | 2717 | 2718 | 2719 | 2720 | 2721 | 2722 | 2723 | 2724 | 2725 | 2726 | 2727 | 2728 | 2729 | 2730 | 2731 | 2732 | 2733 | 2734 | 2735 | 2736 | 2737 | 2738 | 2739 | 2740 | 2741 | 2742 | 2743 | 2744 | 2745 | 2746 | 2747 | 2748 | 2749 | 2750 | 2751 | 2752 | 2753 | 2754 | 2755 | 2756 | 2757 | 2758 | 2759 | 2760 | 2761 | 2762 | 2763 | 2764 | 2765 | 2766 | 2767 | 2768 | 2769 | 2770 | 2771 | 2772 | 2773 | 2774 | 2775 | 2776 | 2777 | 2778 | 2779 | 2780 | 2781 | 2782 | 2783 | 2784 | 2785 | 2786 | 2787 | 2788 | 2789 | 2790 | 2791 | 2792 | 2793 | 2794 | 2795 | 2796 | 2797 | 2798 | 2799 | 2800 | 2801 | 2802 | 2803 | 2804 | 2805 | 2806 | 2807 | 2808 | 2809 | 2810 | 2811 | 2812 | 2813 | 2814 | 2815 | 2816 | 2817 | 2818 | 2819 | 2820 | 2821 | 2822 | 2823 | 2824 | 2825 | 2826 | 2827 | 2828 | 2829 | 2830 | 2831 | 2832 | 2833 | 2834 | 2835 | 2836 | 2837 | 2838 | 2839 | 2840 | 2841 | 2842 | 2843 | 2844 | 2845 | 2846 | 2847 | 2848 | 2849 | 2850 | 2851 | 2852 | 2853 | 2854 | 2855 | 2856 | 2857 | 2858 | 2859 | 2860 | 2861 | 2862 | 2863 | 2864 | 2865 | 2866 | 2867 | 2868 | 2869 | 2870 | 2871 | 2872 | 2873 | 2874 | 2875 | 2876 | 2877 | 2878 | 2879 | 2880 | 2881 | 2882 | 2883 | 2884 | 2885 | 2886 | 2887 | 2888 | 2889 | 2890 | 2891 | 2892 | 2893 | 2894 | 2895 | 2896 | 2897 | 2898 | 2899 | 2900 | 2901 | 2902 | 2903 | 2904 | 2905 | 2906 | 2907 | 2908 | 2909 | 2910 | 2911 | 2912 | 2913 | 2914 | 2915 | 2916 | 2917 | 2918 | 2919 | 2920 | 2921 | 2922 | 2923 | 2924 | 2925 | 2926 | 2927 | 2928 | 2929 | 2930 | 2931 | 2932 | 2933 | 2934 | 2935 | 2936 | 2937 | 2938 | 2939 | 2940 | 2941 | 2942 | 2943 | 2944 | 2945 | 2946 | 2947 | 2948 | 2949 | 2950 | 2951 | 2952 | 2953 | 2954 | 2955 | 2956 | 2957 | 2958 | 2959 | 2960 | 2961 | 2962 | 2963 | 2964 | 2965 | 2966 | 2967 | 2968 | 2969 | 2970 | 2971 | 2972 | 2973 | 2974 | 2975 | 2976 | 2977 | 2978 | 2979 | 2980 | 2981 | 2982 | 2983 | 2984 | 2985 | 2986 | 2987 | 2988 | 2989 | 2990 | 2991 | 2992 | 2993 | 2994 | 2995 | 2996 | 2997 | 2998 | 2999 | 3000 | 3001 | 3002 | 3003 | 3004 | 3005 | 3006 | 3007 | 3008 | 3009 | 3010 | 3011 | 3012 | 3013 | 3014 | 3015 | 3016 | 3017 | 3018 | 3019 | 3020 | 3021 | 3022 | 3023 | 3024 | 3025 | 3026 | 3027 | 3028 | 3029 | 3030 | 3031 | 3032 | 3033 | 3034 | 3035 | 3036 | 3037 | 3038 | 3039 | 3040 | 3041 | 3042 | 3043 | 3044 | 3045 | 3046 | 3047 | 3048 | 3049 | 3050 | 3051 | 3052 | 3053 | 3054 | 3055 | 3056 | 3057 | 3058 | 3059 | 3060 | 3061 | 3062 | 3063 | 3064 | 3065 | 3066 | 3067 | 3068 | 3069 | 3070 | 3071 | 3072 | 3073 | 3074 | 3075 | 3076 | 3077 | 3078 | 3079 | 3080 | 3081 | 3082 | 3083 | 3084 | 3085 | 3086 | 3087 | 3088 | 3089 | 3090 | 3091 | 3092 | 3093 | 3094 | 3095 | 3096 | 3097 | 3098 | 3099 | 3100 | 3101 | 3102 | 3103 | 3104 | 3105 | 3106 | 3107 | 3108 | 3109 | 3110 | 3111 | 3112 | 3113 | 3114 | 3115 | 3116 | 3117 | 3118 | 3119 | 3120 | 3121 | 3122 | 3123 | 3124 | 3125 | 3126 | 3127 | 3128 | 3129 | 3130 | 3131 | 3132 | 3133 | 3134 | 3135 | 3136 | 3137 | 3138 | 3139 | 3140 | 3141 | 3142 | 3143 | 3144 | 3145 | 3146 | 3147 | 3148 | 3149 | 3150 | 3151 | 3152 | 3153 | 3154 | 3155 | 3156 | 3157 | 3158 | 3159 | 3160 | 3161 | 3162 | 3163 | 3164 | 3165 | 3166 | 3167 | 3168 | 3169 | 3170 | 3171 | 3172 | 3173 | 3174 | 3175 | 3176 | 3177 | 3178 | 3179 | 3180 | 3181 | 3182 | 3183 | 3184 | 3185 | 3186 | 3187 | 3188 | 3189 | 3190 | 3191 | 3192 | 3193 | 3194 | 3195 | 3196 | 3197 | 3198 | 3199 | 3200 | 3201 | 3202 | 3203 | 3204 | 3205 | 3206 | 3207 | 3208 | 3209 | 3210 | 3211 | 3212 | 3213 | 3214 | 3215 | 3216 | 3217 | 3218 | 3219 | 3220 | 3221 | 3222 | 3223 | 3224 | 3225 | 3226 | 3227 | 3228 | 3229 | 3230 | 3231 | 3232 | 3233 | 3234 | 3235 | 3236 | 3237 | 3238 | 3239 | 3240 | 3241 | 3242 | 3243 | 3244 | 3245 | 3246 | 3247 | 3248 | 3249 | 3250 | 3251 | 3252 | 3253 | 3254 | 3255 | 3256 | 3257 | 3258 | 3259 | 3260 | 3261 | 3262 | 3263 | 3264 | 3265 | 3266 | 3267 | 3268 | 3269 | 3270 | 3271 | 3272 | 3273 | 3274 | 3275 | 3276 | 3277 | 3278 | 3279 | 3280 | 3281 | 3282 | 3283 | 3284 | 3285 | 3286 | 3287 | 3288 | 3289 | 3290 | 3291 | 3292 | 3293 | 3294 | 3295 | 3296 | 3297 | 3298 | 3299 | 3300 | 3301 | 3302 | 3303 | 3304 | 3305 | 3306 | 3307 | 3308 | 3309 | 3310 | 3311 | 3312 | 3313 | 3314 | 3315 | 3316 | 3317 | 3318 | 3319 | 3320 | 3321 | 3322 | 3323 | 3324 | 3325 | 3326 | 3327 | 3328 | 3329 | 3330 | 3331 | 3332 | 3333 | 3334 | 3335 | 3336 | 3337 | 3338 | 3339 | 3340 | 3341 | 3342 | |
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Rusedski's resurgence to be tested by Becker

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

GREG RUSEDSKI, the British No. 1, will have his resurgence in form severely tested when he faces Boris Becker, three times the Wimbledon champion, in the first round of the Australian Open next week. The draw was made yesterday, as Rusedski's progress in the Peters International tournament in Sydney was halted when he lost 7-5, 7-6 to Todd Martin, of the United States, in the semi-final.

Though buoyed by his successes in the warm-up events, which included a victory over Richard Krajicek, of Holland, the No. 2 seed, and a 29-minute demolition of Carsten Arrhenius, of Germany, Rusedski will need to show the best form of his career to overcome Becker, who will be seeded No. 4 at Flinders Park.

Martin, who will be seeded No. 15 next week, must first face Goran Ivanisevic in the final of the Sydney event. The Croat, who will be seeded No. 10 in Melbourne, earned the right to meet him there with a 6-3, 7-6 win over Todd Woodbridge.

Ivanisevic believes he can mount a serious challenge for the Australian title, having acquired the patience and shot-selection that have so often betrayed the advantage gained by his destructive service.

"Before, I did not have much patience and would go for a winner every second shot," he said. "Now I have to think what to do - whether to go for a winner or not. Physically, I'm in very good shape and can stay back and rally with anyone."

Rusedski's fellow Briton, Tim Henman, fared little better in the draw. He is faced with Petr Korda, the unseeded but talented Czech, who is renowned for his heavy hitting style.

Andre Agassi's preparations for next week's event, the first grand slam tournament of the year, were thrown off course when he was defeated 2-6, 6-2, 7-6 by Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the semi-final of the Colonial Classic in Kooyong. The Russian, who has his own designs on the Australian title, will face Michael Chang, a 6-4, 6-0 winner over Jim Courier, in the final today.

Agassi, who was warned for verbal abuse as he struggled to cope with an onslaught of pace and power from a player who reached the quarter-finals of two grand slam tournaments last year, as well as the semi-final of the French Open, was quick to endorse his opponent's credentials after the match.

"He's certainly a factor to be dealt with and he's talented enough to take the next step," Agassi said. "He's a threat to anybody on a good day."

Kafelnikov said: "I have a really good draw to the quarter-finals of the Open, and if I have a couple of easy matches, anything can happen."

Clare Wood, the leading British woman player, successfully negotiated the first round of the qualifying tournament for the Australian Open, beating Christine Newman, of the United States, 7-6, 3-6, 6-3. Wood now faces Virag Csurgu, of Hungary, in the next round. She requires two more victories to secure her place in the tournament proper.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN SEEDS (US unless stated): Men: 1, P. Sampras; 2, A. Agassi; 3, M. Chang; 4, B. Becker; 5, T. Korda; 6, Y. Kafelnikov; 7, G. Rusedski; 8, J. Courier; 9, W. Ferreira; 10, G. Ivanisevic; 11, T. Henman; 12, A. Bouchard; 13, M. Rios; 14, A. Michalek; 15, T. Woodbridge; 16, P. Korda; 17, J. McEnroe; 18, M. Sam; 19, J. Aronsson; 20, J. Krieger; 21, M. Rios; 22, J. Krieger; 23, J. Krieger; 24, J. Krieger; 25, J. Krieger; 26, J. Krieger; 27, J. Krieger; 28, J. Krieger; 29, J. Krieger; 30, J. Krieger; 31, J. Krieger; 32, J. Krieger; 33, J. Krieger; 34, J. Krieger; 35, J. Krieger; 36, J. Krieger; 37, J. Krieger; 38, J. Krieger; 39, J. Krieger; 40, J. Krieger; 41, J. Krieger; 42, J. Krieger; 43, J. Krieger; 44, J. Krieger; 45, J. Krieger; 46, J. Krieger; 47, J. Krieger; 48, J. Krieger; 49, J. Krieger; 50, J. Krieger; 51, J. Krieger; 52, J. Krieger; 53, J. Krieger; 54, J. Krieger; 55, J. Krieger; 56, J. Krieger; 57, J. Krieger; 58, J. Krieger; 59, J. Krieger; 60, J. Krieger; 61, J. 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PRICE EXCLUDES DELIVERY (£415), NUMBER PLATES AND ROAD FUND LICENCE

Consistent chaser to gain deserved success in competitive renewal

Egypt Mill Prince ready for accession

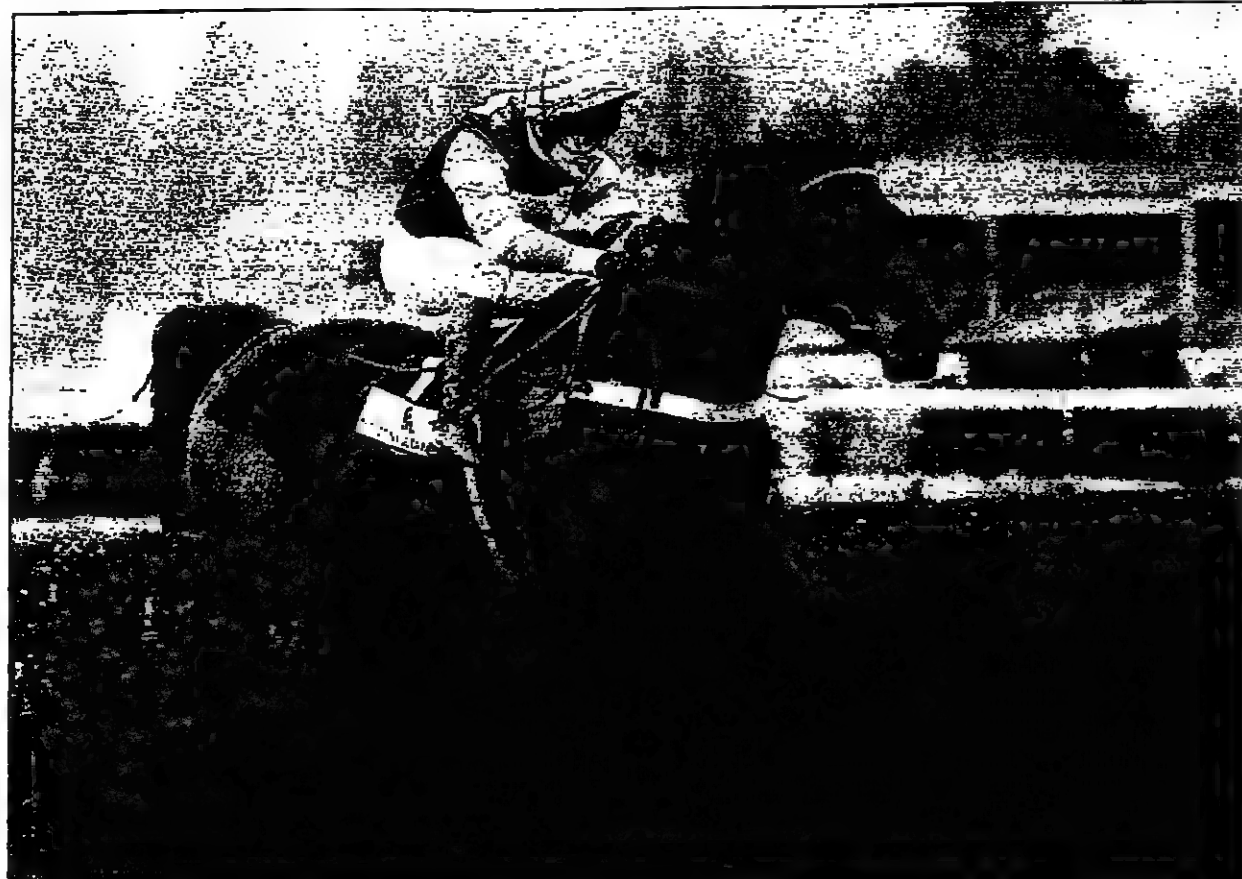
By JULIAN MUSCAT

VICTOR CHANDLER, the prominent rails bookmaker, could not have contrived a more finely balanced contest than the two-mile chase he sponsors at Ascot today. There is enough flavour among the field of 11 to seduce the most hesitant punter.

Chandler will recognise the contest as one in which bets should be laid rather than struck. A quartet of emerging horses, Front Street, Martin's Lamp, Gales Cavalier and Big Matt — confront the proven two-mile specialists Storm Alert, Egypt Mill Prince and Kibreet. The pace will be furious, the margin for error minimal. Given these circumstances, it may be wise to settle on the experience of Egypt Mill Prince.

Victory for the ten-year-old would be well deserved. Jenny Pinner's charge has filled the runner-up berth in the last renewal of this race. His Cheltenham defeat by Dublin Flyer in November was another near-miss in exalted company. Somewhat harshly, critics point to the horse's frustrating habit of flustering to deceive. More often than not, however, he has been ambushed by improving horses carrying lesser weights.

Big Matt has finished behind Egypt Mill Prince on both their encounters this term and he tries again with a reasonable weight concession. Once again, however, Big Matt races from out of the handicap and his tendency to make one serious mistake will count against him.



Certainly Strong puts in a fluent leap on her way to winning the PML Lightning Novices' Chase at Ascot

Gales Cavalier and Kibreet appear closely matched, although both horses love to attack from the front. With the free-running Martin's Lamp also keen to dictate matters, the likes of Nakir, Storm Alert and Uncle Ernie may struggle to remain in touch. Former useful hurdler High Baron

and Dancing Paddy, the latter something of an enigma, will have their suspect jumping tested to the full and a bigger danger looms in the shape of Front Street.

Front Street has had plenty in reserve in each of his three victories this term, showing a useful change of pace. He fits the profile of several previous winners in that he remains unexposed. What he must now prove is his ability to cut it with the best. On only his fifth outing over fences, he represents no value for what is by some way his stiffest test.

Egypt Mill Prince, for his part, has long been accus-

tomed to this level of competition. His fencing is sound and he is never more comfortable than when stalking a strong pace. The Pinner stable is in good form and Egypt Mill Prince can finally achieve for several narrow reversals.

David Nicholson received a boost to the chances of Mar-

tin's Lamp and Storm Alert when saddling Percy Smollett and Certainly Strong to a 22-1 double over fences at Ascot yesterday. Certainly Strong's comfortable victory in the PML Lightning Novices' Chase represented a victory for patience. The mare was named for her wayward tendencies as a youngster and it has taken two years of cajoling to see her settle down.

Certainly Strong runs her rivals ragged from the front, somehow hiding the fences she meets on the wrong stride. She has a similar appetite for the game to Anaglog's Daughter, so it is appropriate that she bids to emulate the Irish runaways' victory in the 1980 Arkle Trophy Chase at Cheltenham.

After unsaddling Certainly Strong, Nicholson resisted the temptation to talk up Viking Flagship in the wake of that horse's poor showing at Wincanton on Thursday. "Like last year, I'll let the horse do the talking for himself," Nicholson said of the reigning champion two-mile chaser.

It would not pass the censor's pen to reveal in precise words how my colleague, Richard Evans, described the winning prospects of his Northern Saddle in the Buckland Handicap Chase. Suffice to say that the horse ran unbacked and promptly obliged under 12 stone for Richard Durnley. But punts will have forgiven Evans his rare lapse. His nap, Treasure Arrow, landed the concluding Rosling King Handicap Hurdle at odds of 14-1.

Seven Of Diamonds can prove ace for Alner

ASCOT

BBC1

1.00: A fascinating contest which pits several of last season's leading bumper horses against some potentially useful recruits from the Flat. Ebullient Equiname made hard work of winning a modest Hereford maiden hurdle on her hurdling bow, but is sure to appreciate today's extra three furlongs.

Wisley Wonder has won his last three starts but may be found wanting for speed here. Most likely to take advantage are Meant To Be and Seasonal Splendour. Both should smart staying form on the

level, but preference is for Martin Pipe's Seasonal Splendour. She was impressive when accounting for Crane Hill at Newton Abbot and is sure to improve for today's longer trip.

1.35: Seven Of Diamonds was outpaced by the useful Front Street and Gales Cavalier over a shorter trip at Newbury, and can return to winning ways back over his optimum distance. Spuffington put up some creditable performances last term, notably when winning two novice chases in heavy ground at Chesham, and would be the chief threat if fully wound up

WARWICK

CHANNEL 4

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

12.55 LEASOWS MAIDEN HURDLE

(£3,798; 2m 4f 110yds) (25 runners)

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for his reappearance. Easy Buck was handed last week's Newton Chase at Haydock by the last fence fall of Morocci, but should again go close.

2.10: See above.

2.35: Simple Arithmetic fell at the fifth when strongly fancied at Sandown last week, but has yet to prove that he stays this trip. Jibber The Kibber was another to make

an early departure last time, when a warm favourite over course and distance. However, this smart hurdler will take all the beating if putting in a clear round.

3.05: Maamoor has been raised just 8lb for his impressive success at Towcester last month and, likely to improve further, can follow up. Moorcroft Boy has his first outing since taking a dreadful tumble at Aintree 14 months ago. He is well treated on his best form, but is likely to need the run. The Malakozona will appreciate every yard of this stamina test and looks best of the remainder.

3.40: Hops And Pops was favoured by the conditions when comfortably beating Great Marquess on her Newbury reappearance, but has more to do here back in handicap company. Bell Staffboy failed to stay three miles at Cheltenham last time, weakening after a bad mistake three out. He remains fairly handicapped, but would not appreciate any further rain.

The improving Pharos makes much more appeal. He made a winning handicap debut at Bangor and should continue his winning run.

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12.25 Dark Nightingale

12.55 Sparkling Yasin

1.30 Swivel

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT

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Saturday portrait: Tim Henman, by Stuart Jones, tennis correspondent

Maturing talent born to carry nation's great expectations

Tony Pickard offered one sliver of optimism. Amid a savage verbal assault on the state of British tennis, which he considered lamentably low, he said that standards could be raised by one individual. He insisted, though, that the identity of the person he had in mind must not be revealed.

Pickard explained that one player, by breaking into the top echelons of international tennis, would lift those just below him in the domestic ranks. Their progress would, in turn, encourage those beneath them. He called the policy, the most expedient solution to the seemingly endless problems, "the pyramid effect".

He was speaking in Portugal some 20 months ago, a few minutes after another dispiritingly familiar Davis Cup defeat and a few hours before he was to leave his post as British team captain. Although expansive in his criticism, he argued that the player concerned should not be exposed as a potential saviour.

To avoid any lingering misunderstanding, however, he agreed to confirm whether a name written on a piece of paper was indeed that of "the unmentionable one". There was no need. Everyone in the room at the Oporto tennis club knew that he was talking about Tim Henman, then 19, from Oxford.

His talent compared to others of a similar age was so strikingly obvious that the supposed cloak of secrecy was translucent. Yet Pickard wanted the youngster to be protected from carrying the burden of the country's expectations prematurely.

On reflection, Henman might have been born and bred for the role. In the lower branches of his family tree is a great-grandmother who made an improbable impact at Wimbledon almost a century before her descendant gained notoriety for becoming the first competitor to be disqualified from the All-England championships.

Ellen Stawell-Brown was the first woman to serve overarm at Wimbledon, an innovative (and, according to accounts of the time, whimsical) weapon which she used to beat Charlotte Cooper, who had already won the tourna-

ment five times. Henman's grandfather, Henry Billington, reached the third round of the men's singles in 1948, 1950 and 1951.

Three of Billington's children competed at junior Wimbledon and one of them, Jane, is Henman's mother. She represented Oxfordshire at tennis and so did his father, Tony, who also played hockey, squash and cricket for the county. He wore the colours of Headington United, too, before the club evolved into Oxford United and attained League status.

Henman himself picked up a racket at the age of three and had decided within a couple of years to pursue a sport which plainly runs through the family blood. The line would otherwise have been broken. His two elder brothers possessed neither the aptitude nor the inclination.

'His ability was so strikingly obvious, the cloak of secrecy was translucent'

Henman's future was threatened almost as soon as it had begun to take shape. He damaged an elbow at the age of 11 and was forced out of competitive action for 18 months. His career was in similar danger in 1993, a year after he turned professional.

As he changed direction in the forecourt during a match against a compatriot, Chris Wilkinson, his leg snapped in three places just above the ankle. Recovery took six months and three pins inserted then are in still place. Nevertheless, the injury did have one significant compensation.

The national junior champion in 1992, Henman had all the shots. Some said he had too many and, when he came to the net, was confused by the wealth of his options. But he did not carry the weight of shot. In a profession populated by muscular giants, he stood tall (6ft 1in) but was considered too slender.

While he was inactive, he put on much-needed pounds. "That's home cooking for you," his mother confided during the journey from Vienna to Bratislava for a Davis Cup tie in the Czech Republic. Although her son featured in the predictably heavy defeat on clay, the benefit was about to be recognised.

The change was noticed by Jeremy Bates, the most regular of his doubles partners, at last year's US Open as Henman came of age. Still so youthful in appearance that he was taken by several onlookers for a schoolboy, he came through the qualifying competition and reached the second round.

Not only his game had developed. While he had formerly been shy and awkward in media circles, he learnt to respond amicably to disparaging comments. A critic of his habit of exchanging "high fives" in doubles, for instance, has since been customarily greeted with the practice.

Henman's maturity was perceptible in the immediate aftermath of the infamous incident at Wimbledon last year. Knocked out of the singles by Pete Sampras, he and Bates were defaulted from the doubles after a ball he hit in a fit of pique inadvertently struck a ball girl.

The match was the last to be completed that day and, in the twilight, the grounds of the All-England Club were virtually deserted. Correspondents, alerted to the news after they had left, were initially reluctant to return for a purpose which defied belief and reason.

In a poll, the mild-mannered Henman would have been perhaps the least likely to earn the unprecedented penalty. He would have been high on the list, though, of those who would be suitably contrite and dignified during a crowded press conference. In the most unlikely fashion, "the unmentionable one" had gained worldwide recognition.

Pickard had proclaimed that Henman, during a tour around the Far East towards the close of 1994, had to infiltrate the world's top 100. "Then we will know whether or not he's going to make it." The broken leg delayed the

breakthrough by a year. Henman won a challenge tournament in Seoul last October, reached the semi-final of another in Peking and claimed a second title on the island of Reunion.

In the middle of the hectic and profitable schedule, he beat Greg Rusedski in the final of the national championships after yielding the opening set in little more than 20 minutes.

During an unbeaten sequence of 21 matches, he collected enough

points to climb to No 95 in the world rankings. The immediate reward was, for the first time, to gain entry into the main draw of a grand slam event, the Australian Open, which starts in Melbourne on Monday. Progress will be difficult, however; he is due to meet Petr Korda, the big hitter from the Czech Republic.

During his build-up this week, he defeated Mark Philippoussis, to whom the Australians are looking for their future. Coached by David

Felgate, the manager of the men's national training department, Henman has already established himself as Britain's finest home-grown player and poses a serious threat to Rusedski's pre-eminence in his adopted country.

If Pickard's theory is correct, the rivals are conveniently sharing the responsibility of elevating domestic tennis.

They share the same self-belief, though Rusedski has aggravated his peers with his arrogance.

Henman, in spite of his aberration at Wimbledon, is perceived as a gentleman, on and off the court.

A closing word of caution, however. If he offers to play golf for even a menial amount of money, turn down the invitation. Without either formal training or practice, and claiming to have no official handicap, he recently went round the East Sussex course in four over par.

Rusedski beaten, page 42



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE MARTIN

THE TIMES MATCH-BY-MATCH GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP THIS WEEKEND

BOLTON v WIMBLEDON

Bolton are getting desperate. Already tailed off at the bottom of the Premiership, they have now signed Enzo Gamba, 29, a defender from AC Milan, on a month's loan. On Todd, the Bolton manager, will be without Gamba this afternoon, as his international clearance has not come through, and is also missing Fairclough and Taggart, who begin suspensions. Jones, of Wimbledon, sits on the sidelines, too, the hard-done-by victim of a four-match ban. When will he learn?

LAST SEASON: No fixtures.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: No fixtures.

BOLTON WANDERERS (from): K. Barragan, S. Green, J. Phillips, A. Stubbs, R. Sheehan, S. Curtis, S. Salter, J. McClellan, M. Stiles, G. Burgeon, A. Todd, S. McKinnon, W. Burnett, D. Lee, A. Devlin.
WIMBLEDON (from): N. Sullivan, C. Cunningham, A. Kinsie, C. Pany, A. Reeves, A. Pearce, R. Eadie, O. Linton, J. Goodman, M. Gayle, D. Holdsworth, S. Elliott, J. Eust, M. Harford, A. Thom, S. Talbot.

EVERTON v CHELSEA

Cheese's form is almost the stuff of titles — one defeat in nine league matches — much to the dismay of Everton fans and the club's board. However, it is doubtful today, probably suffering from a cold, that he will be fit to play. The club's manager, Howard Kendall, says he is a groin injury — just where Chelsea felt they had been kicked after Ferdinand's injury-time equaliser. Ferdinand, Everton's boy from Barbican, may not make it either. He is hamstringed at present, with Amoschi ready to step in to the breach.

LAST SEASON: Everton 3 Chelsea 3.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 2-2, 4-1, —, 0-1, 2-2, 2-1, 0-1, 4-2, 3-0.

How they line up

EVERTON (from): N. Southall, M. Jackson, R. Unsworth, C. Short, G. Abiel, A. Kanchelski, S. Horne, J. Babb, A. Linney, G. Stuart, P. Riebel, D. Amoschi, A. Hinchcliffe, A. Keaton.
CHELSEA (from): D. Kinsie, K. Hitchcock, N. Colgan, M. Dubarry, D. Lee, A. Myers, D. Petrasco, A. Clarke, E. Newton, D. Wise, T. Phelan, R. Gullis, G. Peacock, J. Spencer, M. Hughes, P. Farling.

LEEDS v WEST HAM

Howard Wilkinson is a stressed couple just the signing of his former striker, Lee Chapman, 34, from Ipswich Town, takes a bit of believing. With a trio of forwards — Yeloch, Manning and Deans — unavailable, Sgt Wilko decided to put some in from Portman Road, where Chapman has been dominant for some time. Surely there was somebody better, anywhere? Henry Redfearn, the West Ham manager, has selection problems, too, with Breacher, Haines and Brown missing from the defence. Four games in prospect.

LAST SEASON: Leeds United 2 West Ham United 2.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, —, —, 3-2, —, 0-0, —, 1-0, 0-2.

How they line up

LEEDS UNITED (from): M. Beasley, S. Kelly, G. Palmer, D. Wetherall, R. Johnson, A. Dodge, M. Ford, T. Broth, G. McAllister, G. Speed, R. Williams, L. Chapman, A. Cozens, N. Worthington, M. Tindler, J. Liddle.
WEST HAM UNITED (from): L. Mickleth, S. Potts, J. Dicks, M. Rieper, D. Williamson, R. Slater, J. Morton, J. Bishop, M. Hughes, I. Downie, A. Collins, K. Rowland, S. Lacerda, C. Wylie, P. Shilton.

MANCHESTER UNITED v ASTON VILLA

Old Trafford supporters will breathe a collective sigh of relief this afternoon, with Schuster's reinstatement between the sticks at the expense of the rarely used yet clearly facile Pilkington. Schuster, United's leading scorer, should also return while Cole goes for the previously unattainable — a goal in five successive league matches. Villa are missing Vitoria, who is on duty for Trinidad and Tobago against the United States in the Concacaf Cup tomorrow, but the Johnson-Mossio tandem will still pose problems.

LAST SEASON: Manchester United 1 Aston Villa 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 4-0, 3-1, —, 1-1, 2-0, 1-1, 1-0, 1-1, 3-1, 1-0.

How they line up

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): P. Schuster, G. Neville, S. Bruce, G. Peckham, D. Bell, R. Keane, R. Butt, P. Scholes, R. Higgins, R. Cantone, A. Cole, S. McClair, P. Neville, L. Sharpe, K. Pilkington.
ASTON VILLA (from): M. Bosnich, G. Charles, U. Ekeogu, G. Southgate, P. McGloth, A. Wright, I. Taylor, A. Townsend, M. Draper, S. Micevici, R. Scrimshaw, N. Spink, L. Hendrie, G. Fennell, P. Carr.

MIDDLESBROUGH v ARSENAL

Handbags at Highbury? Surely some minutes until the cows come home, Arsenal might be having a lean time of things in the Premiership — only one win in eight attempts — but the Coca-Cola Cup victory over Newcastle showed their true, lightning spirit. Even Bruce Riebel, Kevin Keegan's assistant, suggested that his playing record was not really spottish. With Boud and Winterburn unavailable, McGovern, 16, could get the nod ahead of Morrow.

LAST SEASON: No fixtures.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, 0-1, —, 1-0, —.

How they line up

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): G. Walsh, C. Liddle, N. Pearson, S. Vickers, P. Whelan, B. Robinson, J. Pollock, P. Stamp, J. Smith, N. Barry, P. Whelan, J. A. Farrel, G. Blackmore, A. Moore, J. Morrow.
ARSENAL (from): D. Seaman, L. Dixon, A. Adams, M. Keown, S. Morrow, G. McGovern, J. Jensen, P. Pearson, D. Platt, D. Bergkamp, J. Wright, G. Heider, P. Dickov, A. Clarke, V. Berran.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v SOUTHAMPTON

Two Premiership victories in nine attempts, plus a fortunate 1-1 FA Cup draw against Stoke City, does not constitute the best of form for England's sole survivors in Europe. Forest must redouble their resilient touch of old if they are to trouble Bayern Munich in the UEFA Cup. Southampton suffer on — without a league win in six outings, though five have been drawn — but will have taken heart from the 3-0 Cup success over Portsmouth. With the hated Pompey harrassed, who came about Premier League survival?

LAST SEASON: Nottingham Forest 3 Southampton 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 2-1, 0-0, 3-3, 3-0, 2-0, 3-1, 1-0, 1-2, —, 2-0.

How they line up

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): M. Crossley, D. Lytle, S. Pearce, C. Cooper, S. Chettle, C. Bart-Williams, S. Stone, A. Gemmell, S. Roy, K. Campbell, I. Wain, A. Haslam, D. Phillips, P. McGee, A. Gillett, S. Howe, A. T. Brown, A. Hinchcliffe, A. Keaton.
SOUTHAMPTON (from): D. Beasant, A. Nelson, S. Chelton, J. Dodd, K. Montcou, J. Magilton, B. Venison, M. Le Tissier, N. Shappery, G. Watson, I. Hareway, N. Macdonald, M. O'Leary, P. Bennett, S. Grobbelaar.

BLACKBURN v QPR

Blackburn are still suffering from severe travel sickness, with Ray Harford unable to find a cure. Even the welcome distraction of an FA Cup trip to Ipswich last week failed to change their fortunes, a 0-0 draw at least giving them a second chance. Bally and Bohinen return today, which should give the Rovers midfield more shape. Rangers are just grateful for any points, home or away, and will be looking to end a run of three successive Premiership defeats. Ray Wilshire's job for the boys policy is admirable yet proving costly.

LAST SEASON: Queens Park Rangers 0 Blackburn Rovers 1.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: —, 0-3, 1-0, 0-1.

How they line up

QPR (from): J. Sommer, D. Bardsley, A. McDonald, K. Ready, D. Maddie, T. Shuster, R. Williams, N. Chantler, A. Impey, B. Allen, M. Halsey, D. Ditcher, A. Roberts, M. Bandler, T. Chelle, G. Goodridge, I. Halloway, S. Vines.
BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): T. Flowers, H. Begg, C. Hendry, C. Coleman, J. Keane, S. Ripley, T. Sherrwood, W. McKinstry, K. Galloway, A. Shawee, M. Newell, R. Martin, M. Mariner, M. Holmes, D. Betty, L. Borinien.

SHEFFIELD WED v LIVERPOOL

Wednesday will entertain until the cows come home, especially now the Yugoslavians, Kovacevic and Stefanovic, have signed David Preece, a Blackburnish road show. Trouble is, Liverpool are in the mood to take them apart this afternoon, with Fowler on fire and Collymore concentrating on goals not pay packets. Roy Evans has to make two enforced changes, with Harrison and Wright ruled out by suspension, but the return of Ruddock and Babb will give Wednesday little respite.

LAST SEASON: Sheffield Wednesday 1 Liverpool 2.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-0, 0-1, 1-5, 2-2, 2-0, —, 0-0, 1-3, 1-2.

How they line up

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): K. Freeman, I. Nolan, L. Blackie, D. Walker, P. Alford, S. Nicol, C. Woodie, M. Dagysa, G. Whittingham, D. Hirst, M. Bright, J. Watts, G. Hyde, A. Sinton, D. Kovacevic, D. Stammers.
LIVERPOOL (from): D. James, R. Jones, S. Soles, N. Ruddock, P. Babb, J. McAteer, S. McKennan, M. Thomas, J. Barnes, F. Fowler, S. Collymore, I. Rush, D. Matteo, S. Peers.

TOTTENHAM v MANCHESTER CITY

What a difference a few days makes. On the Monday, with Premiership points at stake, Tottenham put one over Manchester United 4-1 at wonderful White Hart Lane; on the Saturday, in the FA Cup third round, Tottenham struggled to contain a spirited yet limited Hereford United side on a cowpat of a pitch at Edgar Street. Yesterday, Tottenham were prematurely eliminated from the UEFA Cup next season by virtue of them having not taken the last-Twelfth Cup seriously during the summer. What chance today?

LAST SEASON: Tottenham Hotspur 2 Manchester City 1.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 0-2, 1-0, —, —, 1-1, 3-1, 0-1, 3-1, 0-2, 1-1.

How they line up

TOTTENHAM (from): I. Walker, D. Austin, J. Edinburg, S. Nethercott, G. Mabbott, D. Casky, J. Dozzell, S. Campbell, R. Rosenthal, E. Sheeringham, C. Armstrong, G. McMahon, G. Wilson, J. Dumitrescu, S. Stale.
MANCHESTER CITY (from): E. Iremal, A. Colon, J. Brightwell, K. Symon, K. Cole, A. Konecny, R. Ingens, N. Samardzic, G. Kinsie, M. Brown, N. Quinn, U. Rastar, G. Cressney, R. Ekeford.

COVENTRY v NEWCASTLE

Is there the merest hint of a crack appearing in the armour of the Premiership champions? Was the smart blow of Gino, at Highbury on Wednesday, a sign of frustration building up not only within the Frenchman but also the whole team. Kevin Keegan, having already turned up his nose at the England job, should get a first or two at Highbury Road this afternoon. Real Coventry, handily and they are back on-track, draw scraps or lose untrappily, and the Dribbling Thomases will come in useful.

LAST SEASON: Coventry City 0 Newcastle United 0.
TEN-YEAR RECORD: 1-2, 3-0, 1-3, 2-2, —, —, —, —, 2-1, 0-0.

How they line up

COVENTRY CITY (from): S. Oortwilt, R. Shaw, D. Bunt, D. Barnes, P. Williams, M. Jell, J. Taylor, K. Wetherston, W. Boland, N. Wheeler, A. Pickering, J. Salley, D. Dobson, R. Lampy, J. Ryan.
NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): P. Strick, S. Helou, W. Barton, J. Beresford, D. Peacock, P. Aird, S. Watson, L. Clark, D. Girdle, L. Ferdinand, P. Beardsley, R. Elliot, P. Kison, M. Hottiger.

HOW THEY STAND

| | P | Pts | Goal diff | Recent form |
|---------------------|----|-----|-----------|-------------|
| 1 Newcastle | 21 | 46 | +24 | LWDLW |
| 2 Manchester Utd | 22 | 41 | +14 | LWDLW |
| 3 Liverpool | 21 | 38 | +10 | WWDLW |
| 4 Tottenham | 22 | 38 | +8 | WDGLW |
| 5 Aston Villa | 20 | 35 | +12 | DDWLW |
| 6 Arsenal | 22 | 34 | +8 | — |
| 7 Nottingham Forest | 21 | 34 | +1 | — |
| 8 Middlesbrough | 22 | 33 | +2 | LWLLW |
| 9 Everton | 22 | 32 | +8 | LWDLW |
| 10 Blackburn | 22 | 32 | +7 | — |
| 11 Leeds | 21 | 32 | +1 | WDLLW |
| 12 Chelsea | 22 | 29 | +2 | DDWLW |
| 13 Sheffield Wed | 21 | 25 | -9 | DDLLW |
| 14 West Ham | 20 | 23 | -10 | LDLWL |
| 15 Wimbledon | 22 | 21 | -13 | LDLWL |
| 16 Southampton | 21 | 20 | -9 | DLDDL |
| 17 Coventry | 21 | 19 | -10 | LDLWL |
| 18 Manchester City | 21 | 15 | -10 | LDLWL |
| 19 QPR | 22 | 15 | -16 | WDLLW |
| 20 Bolton | 22 | 12 | -20 | LDLLW |

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

| Today |
|---|
| 10.45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights) |
| Tomorrow |
| 12 noon Sky Sports Goals on Sunday |
| 3.00pm Ford Escort Super Sunday Coventry City v Newcastle (live) |

هنا من النهر

TENNIS 42

RUSEDKI DRAWS
NO COMFORT FROM
TIE WITH BECKER

SPORT

SATURDAY JANUARY 13 1996

RUGBY UNION 43

CLUBS THREATEN
TO PUT BRAKES
ON DRIVE FORWARD

Reluctant Robson pushed to top of the list

BY JOHN GOODBODY

ALL five of the leading contenders to succeed Terry Venables have announced that they do not want to be the new England coach. Gerry Francis and Glenn Hoddle yesterday added their names to the list of declared non-runners, joining those of Bryan Robson, Ray Wilkins and Kevin Keegan.

The Football Association will not take any notice of these public statements and will instead try to persuade the selected candidate — even if he should be one of the big five — why he should take probably the most difficult post in English sport.

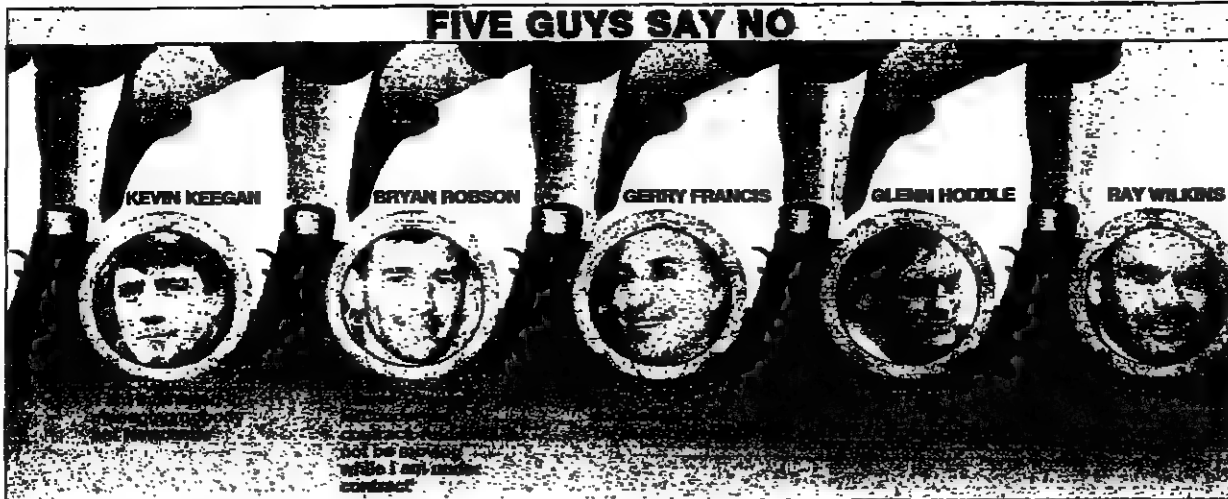
With the FA still resigned to losing Venables after the European championship in June, Robson was yesterday installed as the new favourite with the bookmakers for the post. Ladbrokes quoted him at 2-1.

Robson, one of Venables' assistants with the national

squad, has been less adamant than his fellow FA Carling Premiership managers in his refusal to be considered. He also has an "escape" clause in his contract with Middlesbrough if he were to be offered the post as England coach. However, he is inexperienced and has yet to achieve consistent success as a manager.

The former England captain was clearly being groomed as a possible successor to Venables after the 1998 World Cup.

However, Venables' stated desire to concentrate next autumn on a series of court cases, arising from his long-running dispute with Alan Sugar, the Tottenham Hotspur chairman, and allegations about his business dealings, has upset the timing of the continuity of experience valued by the FA. The national governing body will decide next week on the members of the panel charged with selecting the new coach.



When appointed, it is expected that he will work alongside Venables at the European championship and then take over the task in the autumn of leading England in the qualifying games for the 1998 World Cup finals.

Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, said: "We would hope we have an ideal candidate, who is English and has played international football for England. If the man we want is under contract, we will approach the necessary people

and ask for permission to speak to him."

Later this month, Jimmy Armfield, a technical consultant to the FA, will begin assessing the feeling of coaches and managers, as he did before Venables was appointed

in January 1994. He is likely to find that the professionals still think Venables is the best qualified man and there is a theory that the leading contenders will agree to refuse the job because they want the FA to persuade

Venables to continue. Robson said yesterday: "If people would support Terry Venables rather than kick him, he might change his opinion. I worked with him for 18 months and he is the right man for the job."

Francis said: "I am still of the same opinion as I was two years ago, when I was interviewed about the England position. That is that if my future is in football, it would be at club level. I would also urge the FA to persist, if possible, to try to persuade Terry to change his mind and not to lose the invaluable experience gained over the last two years."

The case for Venables will weaken if the Premier League directly criticises the England coach when it delivers its long-awaited report in the next few weeks into transfer dealings. Details of the deal involving the move of Teddy Sheringham from Nottingham Forest to Tottenham, when Venables was at White Hart Lane, could

embarrass the England coach and may force the FA to take action.

A further complication for the FA is that it also has to appoint a technical director, who will oversee the coaching from grass roots to the elite level. He will be senior to the England coach but the FA wants the pair to have similar views on playing style and

Tottenham suspended — 47
Mandela's greeting — 47
Dunbar's defence — 47

assessment of players. Ian Stott, a member of the international committee and chairman of Oldham Athletic, said that his choice was someone "currently involved in the England set-up".

This is a clear pointer towards Robson, although Wilkins has been working with Dave Sexton on developing the England Under-21 squad.

England's stamina tested by schedule

FROM SIMON WILDE IN JOHANNESBURG

IF IT is Saturday, England's travelling cricketers would have reasoned as they woke this morning: it must be Johannesburg. If it is Johannesburg, they would have thought as they drew back their curtains and looked out, it must be the third one-day international. By breakfast, they would have remembered it will not be Johannesburg for long. Tomorrow they drive an hour to Centurion Park for the fourth match and on Monday fly to Durban for the fifth.

With two gruelling matches completed in Cape Town and Bloemfontein in the past four days, this weekend will test the stamina of both England and South Africa and their managements can be expected to spread the load by resting several players in one or other of the first daytime games in the seven-match series.

Of England's 17 players, only Robin Smith, Jack Russell, Mike Watkinson and Richard Illingworth have yet to appear and all should play today or tomorrow. Smith certainly will, probably as an opener, but Illingworth is still recovering from the side strain he sustained two weeks ago. If he is not fit by Monday, he may return home.

With the score standing at 1-1, the series is set up nicely for its double-header, although after England's five-wicket victory at Springbok Park, Michael Atherton, the England captain, was still rueing his side's failure to win the first match. "It is irritating," he said. "We should be 2-0 up now. But we showed the killer instinct we lacked in Cape Town in the second match. Although there were one or two times when we might have let things slip, I never felt we were going to lose once we needed five an over from the last ten overs. The feeling in the dressing-room after the defeat in Cape Town was not one we want to experience again."

There were several other encouraging aspects about England's performance on Thursday. One was simply the fact that they beat South Africa for the first time in seven matches, another that

the batsmen finally operated as a unit again. Three of them — Atherton, Hick and Thorpe — made half-centuries for the first time in an international since the first Test.

The control exercised by Hick and Neil Smith was also heartening, bearing in mind the slow pitches of the Asian subcontinent on which the World Cup will be played next month. They came on to bowl with Hudson and Snell rampant and dragged England back into the game. Each presents himself as a possible partner for Illingworth in the World Cup.

England's decision to use a pinch-hitter was taken only in the interval between innings but it worked well enough for them to try it again. On Thursday, the choice lay between DeFreitas and White — DeFreitas being chosen — but in future the options may include others.

One of the benefits of the strategy is that it helps the balance of the side. When Fairbrother was fifth out with 42 runs still needed from seven overs, it was reassuring to see Stewart walking out rather than one of England's several bowlers who bat a bit.

Far less welcome was Ramprakash's continued failure. It was typical of his luck that he should be run out by an exceptional piece of fielding by Rhodes but England have not given up on him, despite his record of five runs in five innings. Raymond Illingworth, the manager, said yesterday that he wanted Ramprakash to play over the weekend.

"Mark was very down last night," Illingworth said. He remains very much in our thoughts for the World Cup. He is an outstanding fielder and runs well between the wickets."

Ramprakash's ability in the field is a strong factor in his favour because, in this area, England look far from world champion material. "We were not 100 per cent last night. There was a lot of fumbling and eyes taken off the ball," Illingworth said. Unfortunately for Ramprakash, these are not problems Rhodes has.



Bird, in typical pose, points an admonishing finger at a spectator who has had the temerity to interrupt play

Bird bows to Father Time

IT WAS the hardest decision Dickie Bird has ever made. Cricket's best-known umpire has given himself out after standing in 65 Test matches, more than anyone else, and 92 one-day internationals.

His detractors will say that it makes a change from saying "not out" because, if there was ever any criticism, it was about his tendency to give batsmen the benefit of the doubt, but most cricket lovers will be sad to see him go.

Bird has agreed to retire from international cricket after umpiring one more Test — fittingly at Lord's when England play India in June — because, he says, the time has come to give somebody else a chance. "A five-day Test is much harder work these days," he said. "You get tired and you are continuously under the eye of the media."

One suspects that it is the television camera more than fatigue that has persuaded him to call it a day. He has built his reputation on an almost uncanny ability to make the right decision, so it came as a shock when he had to ask the third umpire, watch-

ing a TV replay, to decide whether Graeme Hick had been run out in a one-day international last summer.

Bird does not like television's intrusion into his job but television likes him — the white cap, the switching of the shoulders as if his back is bothering him, which it sometimes does, and the shooting of the cuffs. Television has been good to him, too, because it has shown how often he did get things right with a swift and unerring judgment which was completely at odds with the rest of his character. He is a born worrier.

Everything seems to have happened to Dickie since he was a young batsman at Barnsley, where they still talk about how he managed to buckle his pads together and fell over when he tried to go out to bat. Yorkshire dropped him after he had scored 181 not out and, while he was fielding for Leicestershire, he crashed head-first through a boundary

board and a joiner had to cut him free. When he went to London to umpire his first county match in 1970, a policeman apprehended him as he tried to climb over the wall of the Oval at 6.30am.

It snowed when he was umpiring at Buxton in the flaming June of 1975, water came up instead of down because of a blocked drain at Headingley in 1983, it rained for the first time in five years when he went to Sharjah and sunshine glinting off a warehouse roof stopped play at Old Trafford, of all places, last summer.

There was a bomb scare at Lord's, where he sat on the covers on the reasonable assumption that there would not be any explosives underneath them, firecrackers under his feet at Trent Bridge, courtesy of Allan Lamb, and a mobile phone on which Ian Botham rang to ask him to tell Lamb to play a few shots.

Memories, memories ...

and dear old Dickie was reliving them all yesterday at Torquay, where he likes to escape the winter chill of his beloved Barnsley, when he is not umpiring abroad. He is 63 and, although he will carry on umpiring in county cricket for two more years, he knows that the time is right to end his international career.

"I have always said that the most important thing in umpiring is gaining the respect of the players and I like to think that I have done that throughout the world," he said.

Dickie used to say that cricket was his life. Now the bachelor, who once received several proposals of marriage when he admitted that he was sometimes lonely, says that cricket is his wife. He is not seeking a divorce.

Al Peter Willey, a former England batsman, has been promoted to the National Grid international umpires panel. Willey and George Sharp replace Bird and Nigel Plews, joining Mervyn Kitchen and David Shepherd as England's representatives.

Leading article, page 21



Bird and colleague David Shepherd in relaxed mood after abandoning play at Lord's. Life was rather more serious for him as a player with Leicestershire



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Japanese sponsorship brings cheer to Harlequins

Adrian Stoop may not have liked it, but, next season, the rugby union ground in Twickenham that bears his name will feature the glitz and glamour usually associated with American sport. Harlequins, founded in 1866 and with more than 200 international players to their name, are to introduce dancing girls and cheerleaders in a total-entertainment package.

One says Harlequins advisedly — from next September,

they will be officially known as NEC Harlequins, after the announcement yesterday of a substantial sponsorship, over three years, by the Japanese communications giant previously associated with Everton Football Club and the Davis and Federation Cups in tennis.

All of a sudden, youth development programmes take on an entirely new meaning. Part of the agreement is specifically to fund a development officer to attract



David Hands says stalwarts at the Stoop could be in for a shock next season thanks to a deal announced yesterday

youngsters to the game from the capital and beyond, but NEC suggested that cheerleaders might prove a valuable addition to the ground attractions beyond those provided by such players as the

captains of England and Ireland, Will Carling and Jim Staples respectively. It struck a chord. "We want 4,000 people in our new stand to go away feeling they have had their money's worth.

from the game, from pre-match entertainment, from a family day out." Dick Best, the club's director of rugby, said: "I was privileged to be at the World Cup final and the entertainment laid on by South Africa that day was outstanding. We will have to get a professional outfit because we want to do it properly, but there is an additional budget for marketing and promotion."

The agreement, reported to be worth more than £15

million, is only the first stage of the club's refurbishment. Harlequins are in negotiation with three more companies for investment that will help underpin contracts for around 35 players, intended to bind a core of players to Harlequins until 1999. "We will be highly competitive in the terms we offer our players," Roger Looker, the chairman, said. He denied that the incorporation of NEC into the club title implied any loss of control.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

RUGBY UNION
CLOSE THEATRE
TO THE PUBLIC
ON OPTIC SERVICE

the list

Elizabeth's story



■ Today we begin our exclusive serialisation of *Elizabeth*. The acclaimed royal biographer Sarah Bradford was allowed access not only to private correspondence and memoirs, but also to the Queen's inner circle. The result is the most revealing, intimate and authoritative portrait of the Queen ever written.



NEXT WEEK

- Further extracts from Sarah Bradford's book, including:
- The relationship between the Queen and Princess Margaret.
- The Queen as a mother.
- The private woman behind the public role.

WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 13 1996

Portrait of a very royal marriage

THE QUEEN has been through family troubles in the past few years which would have shattered someone more emotionally fragile than she is. For her personally there has been just one consolation. The events of the *annus horribilis* and its aftermath have drawn her and her husband closer together. Philip has gone out of his way to show his affection and support for her.

"They have come together very much lately," a courtier said. On occasions when Elizabeth carried out some evening function without him, she would return to find him waiting up for her even if it was after midnight. "I think he's been absolutely wonderful to her and incredibly supportive and sort of around," a relation said. "They're like Darby and Joan now — it's very sweet really."

Elizabeth has a dream, a fantasy that she knows she can never realise. There is a valley in Lancashire, near Clitheroe and the beautiful Forest of Bowland, where, she once told a friend: "Philip and I would like to retire to..." But their relationship has not always been such a tranquil one, particularly in the early days.

Tommy Lascelles, who was the King's private secretary, probably summed up early court reactions to Prince Philip when he told a friend. "They felt he was rough, ill-mannered, uneducated and would probably not be faithful." What Lascelles meant by "rough and ill-mannered" was that Prince Philip was "cocky".

PHILIP was attractive to women. Apart from his physical appeal, he was good company. "He was very amusing, gay, full of life and energy and he was a tease," his cousin said. Before he had first met Elizabeth at Dartmouth in 1939 there had been girls in his life, including a beautiful young Canadian debutante, Osla Benning. In the summer of 1939 he almost became engaged to her, but rumour had it that his uncle, the ever-vigilant Lord Mountbatten, had other prospects in mind and put a stop to it.

When Philip and his close friend Mike Parker had been based together in Australia on the Pacific Station during the last year of the war, there had always been "armfuls of girls" on their nights out ashore, according to Parker. News of their escapades had reached the ears of senior courtiers at the Palace. One confided his doubts about the likelihood of the future Prince Consort's remaining faithful in the light of his behaviour in Australia; but, like most courtiers, he would not report this kind of thing to his employers.

There had never, apparently, been anything serious: he was too cool emotionally to fall in love. "Philip [and his uncle, Louis Mountbatten] are cold, Germanic Battenbergs," a relation said of him. He was dominant, masculine, but not a romantic. "He's 150 per cent male and that's his trouble really," a contemporary said of him. Typically he was always dismissive when later questioned by biographers about his romance with Elizabeth, as if talking about such things was not what a real man would do.

"I went to the theatre with them [the Royal Family] once, something like that. And then during the war, if I was here I'd call in and have a meal. I once or twice spent Christmas at Windsor, because I'd nowhere particular to go. I thought not all that much about it, I think. We used to correspond occasionally..."

Philip's independence of spirit and his refusal to kowtow to anyone were qualities which particularly appealed to the young Elizabeth, surrounded as she was by the deference of courtiers, servants — anybody, in fact, with whom she came into contact outside her own family. They were not, however, qualities which endeared him to courtiers.

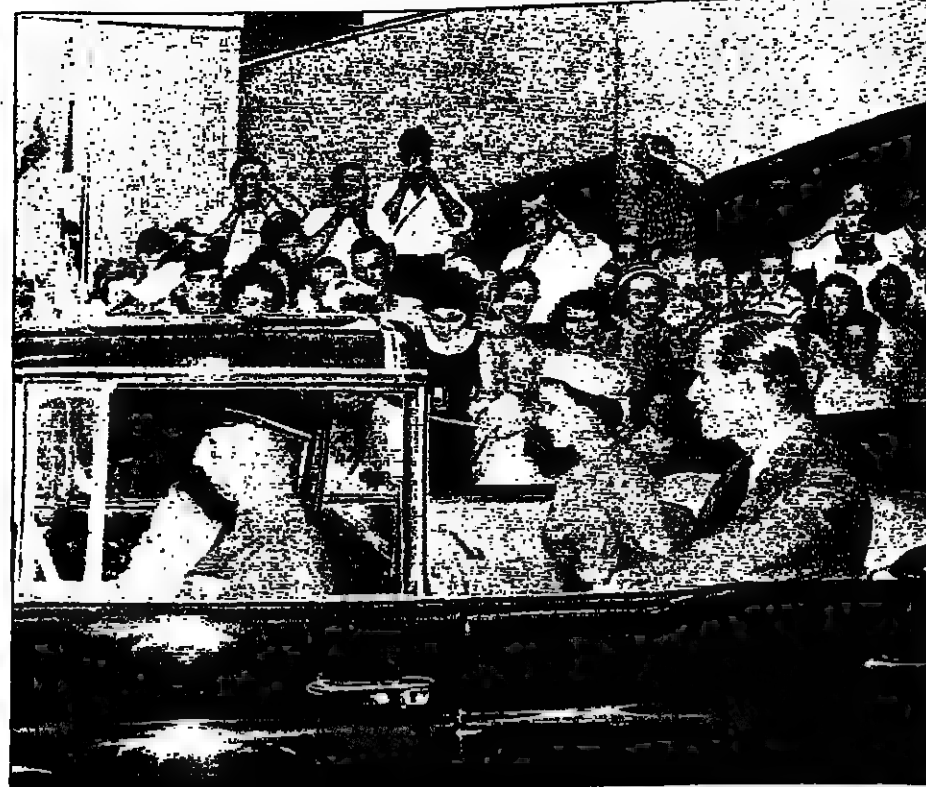
Opposition to the idea of her marriage with Philip came not so much from within her own family as from the older courtier, Tommy Lascelles, the most influential man at court, and



Mutual support: over the years, Philip and Elizabeth have drawn closer together. Yet as a newlywed, the Duke felt so stifled in his role that he called himself "a bloody amoeba"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'He shouts at the Queen sometimes, as he shouts at other people...



Scenes from a marriage in the spotlight... clockwise from left: At the start of their honeymoon; newly engaged at Buckingham Palace; on a visit to Toronto, Canada; replying a bouquet, 1994; waves for the crowd in Liverpool, 1961

Continued from page 1

also from the King's old friends, Lords Eldon, Stanley and Salisbury, and the Queen Mother's brother, David Bowes Lyon. "They were bloody to him" one of Elizabeth's ladies recalled. They would have preferred the Princess to marry someone with a high position of his own, who would have slipped easily into court circles — a rich, sporting, English duke rather than a penniless foreign prince.

Elizabeth was probably unaware of the hostility towards Philip on the part of some of the courtiers and her father's friends, but if she had been it would have made no difference. She was in love with him and wanted to marry him, and when he proposed to her at Balmoral in the late summer of 1946, she accepted.

It does not seem to have been any formal kind of proposal. Prince Philip himself described it to his biographer in his usual offhand way: "I suppose one thing led to another. It was sort of fixed up. That's what really happened."

"Lilibet's engagement keeps meandering on for ages," Margaret reported to Crawley (the late Marion Crawford, her and Elizabeth's governess). "Nothing was to be official because the King wanted it that way."

Prince Philip put it bluntly: "After all, if you spend ten minutes thinking about it — and a lot of these people spent a great deal more time thinking about it — how many obviously eligible young men, other than people living in this country, were available?"

Some of the more romantic-minded in royal circles thought that if Elizabeth and Philip were in love, they should show it more. They were thought almost too keen to take part in all the social activities, never showing lover-like tendencies to want to be alone with each other. The two of them had the same attitude towards displays of emotion, regarding them as somehow "phony".

Elizabeth's central relationship is with her husband. Despite the fact that, as a friend, Philip is a difficult man and the Queen finds him difficult, she adores him and defers to him, which seems all the more strange to observers in that everyone else defers to her.

"He shouts at the Queen some-

times, as he shouts at other people and she doesn't seem to mind, it's as if she thinks that's how husbands behave," a friend said. On one occasion, after Elizabeth had ordered something to be done in the park at Windsor, Philip exploded at luncheon: "What bloody fool arranged for that?" Elizabeth said, "I did." "Well," her husband shouted, "it was a bloody stupid thing to do." A brave courtier intervened. "Excuse me, Sir, but Her Majesty was quite right." "Well," said Elizabeth, "I'm glad somebody's standing up for me around here."

When he pays her a rare compliment, like telling her she looks lovely in a particular dress, "she looks like a child, looks like you'd given her the world". This does not prevent her telling him sharply to "shut up!" if he is sounding off about something he knows very little about, or in a way she thinks is tactless, usually in a Commonwealth context. In return he is protective of her. Nothing makes him angrier than a gesture which he might detect as the faintest disrespect towards her. "Keep that bloody camera away from the Queen!" he exploded during the filming of *Royal Family*, when he thought the cameraman was getting intrusively close to her. They understand each other on a deep level and the marriage works.

THE QUESTION of Philip's fidelity is, like the real extent of Elizabeth's personal fortune, the last bastion which courtiers will defend to the death. Money and sex, the two questions which most excite the public interest, are naturally the ones which the courtiers least want to see exposed. In defence of their Queen, even the most open and truthful of courtiers is prepared to lie or feign ignorance.

Elizabeth notices: she is an exceptionally observant person. Once, at a party given in Scotland, Elizabeth was seated at a table beside the dance floor, ostensibly talking about racing. But her eyes were elsewhere and, as the dancers paraded, she could see her husband dancing very close to the hostess's daughter. She sees but she does not want to know, taking it all in her stride. Nor does she want to be told. When a lady-in-waiting attempted

to enlighten her, Elizabeth sacked her, despite their long years of friendship. Sadly, some years later the lady committed suicide.

There is a very royal marriage: Elizabeth's generation was not brought up to expect fidelity but loyalty. Philip is not the man to fall hopelessly in love. Elizabeth understands his desire for independence and to be his own man and makes allowances for it. Philip goes his own way, restless, always on the move. He makes his own plans, often without consulting his wife.

In the beginning the marriage was a success on every level: physically, mentally and temperamentally the couple were compatible. Elizabeth was physically passionate and very much in love with her husband. Philip found her sexually attractive and was equally, although perhaps more coolly, in love. And importantly, for a man like Philip, he loved and respected her. There was a traditional marriage. Elizabeth was used to a household in which the man came first and Philip was a particularly dominant male.

For a hyperactive and intelligent man such as Philip, the role of royal consort is not an easy one. His predecessor as consort was allowed every privilege. But then, as Disraeli once declared, Albert, husband of Victoria, was virtual ruler of England. Philip was made a Privy Counsellor, but Elizabeth had no intention of following the example of her great-great-grandmother of involving her consort in her official business as ruler. When she became Queen she acquired a new authority. She would operate just as her father had, with access to state papers and reports of Cabinet meetings and parliamentary proceedings, supplemented by a weekly interview with the Prime Minister. Philip was relegated to carrying out official duties and the overseeing of the estates. He would have to carve out a role for himself. The imbalance between his position and hers, and her anxiety to compensate for it, were to influence the course of their and their children's lives.

● An edited extract from Elizabeth, A Biography of Her Majesty the Queen, to be published by William Heinemann on February 5, £20.

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Bickering and bad grace

House of Windsor triumphant

THE MOST wounding blow for Philip came only three days after the funeral of George VI. On February 18, 1952, an agitated Queen Mary reported that Mountbatten, Philip's uncle whose name he shared, had told a party of royal guests "that the House of Mountbatten now reigned".

Queen Mary had spent a sleepless night worrying over this and was greatly relieved when the Churchill-led Government came down "strongly of the opinion that the family name of Windsor should be retained". Descendants should continue to bear the family name of Windsor, and the Lord Chancellor was deputed to prepare a draft proclamation.

Philip subsequently had what a courtier described as "a huge row" at Sandringham with the Lord Chancellor — "he really minded about it" — and followed up with a "strongly but ably worded memorandum" objecting to its intended declaration that the Royal Family remained the House of Windsor. This annoyed Churchill, who engineered two meetings with the Queen's own family, particularly where her grandmother and mother were concerned, was strongly against any feelings of her father.

Elizabeth was particularly conscious of the continuity that her

Churchill on March 12. Presumably because of the fierce behind-the-scenes row that the question had aroused, it was decided not to make it the subject of a public proclamation, but instead a declaration by the Queen to the Privy Council which would subsequently be published in the *London Gazette*.

On April 7, the Lord Chancellor produced a memorandum for the Queen's amended draft declaration. The message was unequivocal: "I hereby declare My Will and Pleasure that I and My children shall be styled and known as the House and Family of Windsor, and that my descendants who marry and their descendants, shall bear the name of Windsor."

Why did Elizabeth deliver what amounted to a slap in the face to her husband? Mountbatten, whose tactlessness had brought on the whole affair, attributed it to Lord Beaverbrook's malign influence over Churchill, "coupled with Winston's disenchantment with what I did in India". But the feeling within the Queen's own family, particularly where her grandmother and mother were concerned, was strongly against any feelings of her father.

Elizabeth was particularly conscious of the continuity that her

family represented and determined to carry on in the traditions which her father and grandfather had established, virtuous and dedicated, putting duty and service above all else.

Consequently, the first and principal casualty of Elizabeth's accession was her husband. Philip's naval career came to an abrupt end. Not only was he forced to give up a service in which he had spent most of his life, but also Clarence House, the first real home he had had, and on which he had lavished such care and attention. He suggested that rather than leave Clarence House, he and his family should continue to live there, while using Buckingham Palace as an office.

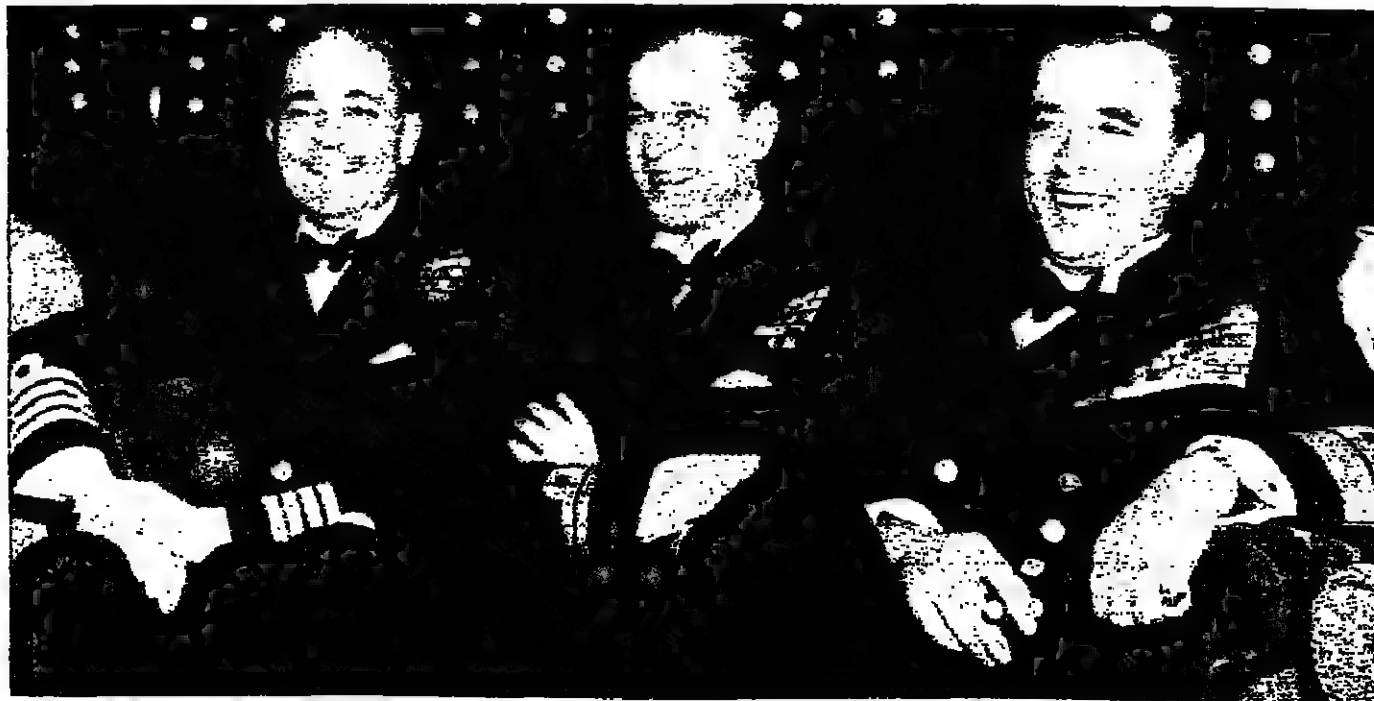
"PRINCE PHILIP didn't want to go to Buckingham Palace," one of the Queen's household said, "but all the old codgers said 'you must go'." Churchill backed them up; Buckingham Palace had always been the home of the monarch and would continue to be so. Where Philip had once been so much in charge, his influence was now restricted to walking a pace behind his wife at public functions and organising as much of the private side of their lives as he was allowed to do.

Philip took it very hard. "I'm

nothing but a bloody amoeba," he exploded. He felt robbed of his identity and he was, perhaps, disconcerted by Elizabeth's newfound ease and self-confidence.

Philip's most recent promotion, agreed in Cabinet on February 22, 1957, was the title of Prince of the United Kingdom. This had not been Elizabeth's idea but the suggestion of Churchill, who told the Cabinet on March 2, 1955, that he had put it forward "in informal conversation with the Queen" and that she had been favourably disposed towards it. Elizabeth, perhaps significantly however, did nothing to follow it up for nearly two years, not until February 1957.

In Cabinet, the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, characteristically claimed the credit for it. He had, he said, proposed the idea to the Queen "in recognition of the great services which HRH had provided to the country and of his unique contribution to the life of the Commonwealth, culminating in the tour which he has just concluded". What Macmillan did not say, but which was almost certainly his intention, was that this should knock on the head all the rumours about rifts in the royal marriage by making Elizabeth be seen publicly to reward her husband for his services.



The fun-loving Duke of Edinburgh (centre) at his bachelor party in 1947, with his uncle Earl Mountbatten (right) and a friend

Marriage Milestones

- The Queen: Born Princess Elizabeth of York, London, 1926.
- The Duke: Born Prince Philip of Greece, Corfu, 1921.
- First met: Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, 1939.
- Engaged: Announcement made July 10, 1947.
- Married: Westminster Abbey, November 20, 1947.
- Children: Charles, b November 20, 1948; Anne, b August 15, 1950; Andrew, b February 19, 1960; Edward, b March 10, 1964.

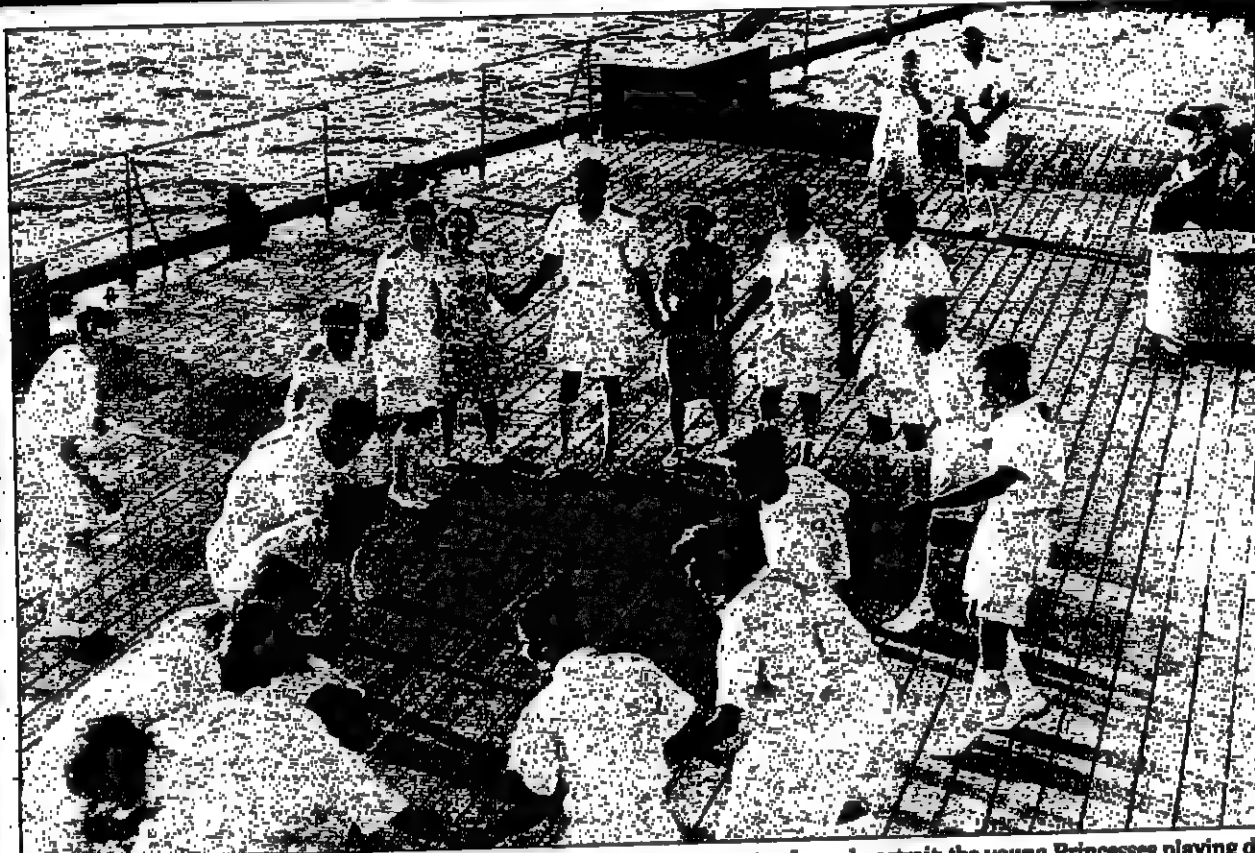
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3

...she doesn't seem to mind. It's as if she thinks that's how husbands are'



Royal Family through the years: clockwise, from top left — Elizabeth and Philip at the Calgary stampede; at the Dorchester with Margaret; a formal portrait; the young Princesses playing deck games on board HMS Vanguard; on holiday at Balmoral

Rumours of scandal

Philip and the Thursday Club

AT THE MOMENT when British paratroopers were descending from the sky over the Suez Canal Zone, Elizabeth's husband was on the Royal Yacht Britannia off the eastern coast of Ceylon (as it then was). Accompanied by Mike Parker, an old naval friend, and the artist Edward Seago, he was halfway through what was billed as a tour of the outlying territories of the Commonwealth.

Philip was escaping from the Palace. On that four-month tour he could feel free to grow a naval-looking beard and indulge his interests in watercolour painting, wildlife and science. By the time the tour was over, rumours that Elizabeth's marriage was in trouble had made headlines across the world. "Last week," *Time* reported on February 18, 1957, "the (rumour) mongering winds were howling louder around Buckingham Palace than they had since the day of Wallis Warfield Simpson and Edward VIII."

Gossip columnists digging into the pasts of both Philip and Parker came up with the Thursday Club, organised by the top society photographer, Baron. The Thursday Club was an informal luncheon club, of which members included leading journalists, the actors James Robertson, David Niven and Peter Ustinov and humorists Patrick Campbell and Larry Adler.

IT WAS a typically all-male affair, with no purpose beyond starting the weekend early. The members ate fish and drank Wheeler's house white wine, and the atmosphere, according to one member, was of "high spirits stimulated by the brilliance of the backchat", funny stories, barracking and dirty talk.

The animating spirit and original founder of the Thursday Club, Baron Henry Stirling-Nahum (always known simply by his first name), was a colourful figure in London society. Baron introduced Philip, his cousin David Milford Haven, and Parker to a social circle in London which was as far removed as it was possible to be from Philip's royal in-laws "tweedy" and ultra-respectable friends.



Parted by the Palace: Mike Parker and Philip

It was a world in which aristocrats met showgirls, a peculiarly 1950s London phenomenon, which ended with the Profumo scandal in 1963. Baron and his brother were "passports to all sorts of people in London... they were lively lads at a very lively time".

The Thursday Club did not confine itself to lunches. According to Larry Adler, a founder member with Baron, they gave Philip a "bachelor night" party at Baron's flat in the mews of Bruton Place — "Boy, was he nervous... his face was white with fear" — and there would be an annual dinner for Philip at Mike Parker's flat. There were a lot of schoolboyish high jinks. At a pre-wedding lunch for Guy Middleton, Philip and Milford Haven threw smoke bombs into the fireplace and the room filled with smoke. Everybody's face was black, the police were called, but it was hushed up.

Pranks were one thing, sexual scandal quite another. The Palace was not amused when gossip columnists

linked Philip with Baron's girlfriend, the beautiful musical star Pat Kirkwood, whose legs Kenneth Tynan once described as "the eighth wonder of the world". Their first meeting took place in October 1948, when Elizabeth was heavily pregnant with Charles.

According to Pat Kirkwood some 40 years later, they met when Baron came to pick her up at the Hippodrome Theatre near Leicester Square, bringing with him Philip and a naval quarry named "Basher" Watkins. They had dinner at Les Ambassadeurs, an ultra-fashionable Mayfair restaurant and gambling club, moving to the Milroy nightclub, where Philip asked Pat Kirkwood to dance. Several couples, described by Kirkwood as "courtiers", looked shocked. Philip pulled faces at them, but they reported back to the Palace. The King was outraged.

Pat Kirkwood has always denied that she and Philip had an affair.

There were rumours, too, of Philip's relations before his

marriage with Helene Cordet, who in the late 1950s ran a nightclub called The Saddle Room in Hamilton Place, but the Duke's authorised biographer, Tim Heald, insists that the two of them were just childhood friends.

Philip's defence, then and always, against allegations of infidelity was the impossibility of escaping from his detectives. At a party with Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, husband of Queen Juliana, he once got down on his knees and salaamed to him — "You're a lucky guy," he told him. "I have six security men behind me all the time..." Prince Bernhard, according to a witness, was not amused.

JOAN GRAHAM, the London-based "Mayfair Set Correspondent" of the *Balti-more Sun*, sent a report of "whispers" that "the Duke of Edinburgh had more than a passing interest in an unnamed woman and was meeting her regularly in the apartment of the court photographer".

Thursday Club luncheons were represented as orgies and the rumour went round that Parker (who was in the middle of a divorce) had been dropped specifically so that he could no longer lead the Duke astray.

Through gritted teeth, the royal press office denied that there was any rift between the Queen and her husband, and Elizabeth let it be known that she planned to fly that week to Lisbon to join Philip there, two days before beginning a joint state visit.

In anticipation of the meeting, Philip had shaved off the ginger beard he had grown. When he boarded the plane, he found the entire party, including his wife, wearing false ginger whiskers. Elizabeth emerged from the plane "with a broad grin" and, after shaking hands with the assembled dignitaries, the couple drove off "in dignified silence", according to the reporters, one of whom claimed to have spotted a "tiny smudge of lipstick" on the duke's cheek — "an all's well signal that spread to the four corners of the Earth", *Time* announced.

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'Elizabeth restrained the PM in some of her more tactless moods'

Tensions grow with Mrs Thatcher

The tensions between the Palace and Margaret Thatcher were highlighted by what became known as the Sunday Times affair.

On July 30, 1986, just before the Commonwealth Games were to be held in Edinburgh, having been boycotted by a number of nations in protest against Britain's stubbornness over sanctions against South Africa, *The Sunday Times* ran a front-page story that Elizabeth was deeply unhappy with Mrs Thatcher's policies. "This dismay goes well beyond the current crisis in the Commonwealth over South Africa. In an unprecedented disclosure of the monarch's views, it was said that the Queen considers the PM's approach to be uncaring, confrontational and divisive."

Elizabeth was horrified and Mrs Thatcher, always sensitive to the multiplying stories in the press that she and Elizabeth did not get on, was deeply hurt — so much so that she did not even mention the episode in her memoirs. The Queen's private secretary, Sir William Heseltine, in time-honoured fashion, wrote a letter to *The Times* in which he asserted the Queen's constitutional right to counsel, encourage and warn her ministers: "She is entitled to have opinions on Government policy and express them to her chief ministers." Whatever personal opinions the Sovereign may hold or may have expressed to the Government, he said, "she is bound to accept and act on the advice of her Government". Lastly, the Queen was "obliged to treat her communications with the Prime Minister as entirely confidential between the two of them". It was "preposterous" to think that the Queen, after 34 years' experience, would have departed from those basic principles, he wrote. He admitted that the Queen's press secretary, Michael Shea, had talked to Simon Freeman, the journalist concerned, but claimed that he had "said nothing which could reasonably bear the interpretation put upon it by the front-page article of July 30". The claim that the contents of the article were based on information coming from Palace sources close to the Queen "constitutes a totally unjustified slur on the impartiality and discretion of members of the Royal Household".

Shea did not know Freeman, had never met him and the interview had not been face-to-face but over the telephone in response to Freeman's request for an interview on the general theme of "The Monarchy in 2011". According to Shea, the journalist extrapolated what he said into sensational claims about Elizabeth's unhappiness with Mrs Thatcher's policies.

People close to Mrs Thatcher at the time, however, believe that, although Shea certainly never con-

sulted Elizabeth about any inspired "leak" of her views and that she would never have authorised any such thing, "there is no smoke without a fire".

No one at 10 Downing Street at the time suspected Elizabeth of being involved in any way, but they did think it unlikely that Shea would have taken it upon himself to brief this journalist without consultation with some member of the Private Secretaries Office and an agreement that a carefully placed hint might "do some good". The Queen loyally stood by her Press Secretary. At Holyroodhouse, just after the story broke, Shea sat between Elizabeth and Mrs Thatcher, both of whom told him to pay no attention to the media rumpus, but nonetheless his position in relation to Downing Street had become difficult. Accompanying Elizabeth on the state visit to China, during which Philip made a widely publicised remark about "slitty eyes", Shea became involved in a televised scuffle with Chinese security guards. He decided that he had had enough and six months later left to join Hanson.

Eighteen months previously, in 1984-85, Mrs Thatcher had taken on the British coalminers in a prolonged battle which ended in defeat for the National Union of Mineworkers. At the very end of the strike Elizabeth and Philip visited *The Times* on the occasion of the newspaper's bicentenary. While Philip, in his customary forthright way, is alleged to have denounced the miners' leader, Arthur Scargill, as "a shir", Elizabeth was introduced to the paper's labour editor, Paul Routledge, as the man covering the miners' strike. She volunteered that she had been down a colliery in Scotland that had closed soon afterwards and, after a pause, added, "It's all about one man, isn't it?" Routledge replied that perhaps it wasn't about one man and that, knowing the miners and having been brought up among them, he didn't think one man could bring out 100,000 men on strike for a whole year. "There was a pregnant pause," Routledge recalled, and the party moved on.

Eight years later, having written an unauthorised biography of Scargill, Routledge admitted: "With the hindsight that has come from writing this book, I now feel that I owe the Queen an apology. By that stage, at any rate, the strike was about one man. Scargill may not have started the strike, but one word, one signal from him could have called it off... The Queen was right."

Elizabeth, therefore, did not blame Mrs Thatcher for the miners' strike. No one has ever discovered what her feelings were when Mrs Thatcher took the salute of the returned Falklands veterans in the

parade through the City of London in October 1982. She may have reflected that the Falklands victory was very much Mrs Thatcher's, but other people thought it odd to see the Prime Minister standing on the dais instead of the Queen, who is head of the Armed Forces. Not one member of the Royal Family was invited to be present at this ceremonial occasion, in contrast to the 1945 parade celebrating the end of the Second World War, when the King took the salute with Churchill and Attlee at a discreet distance.

Mrs Thatcher did not, however, attend the fortieth anniversary celebrations of D-Day in 1984 because she considered it very much the Queen's occasion, and perhaps to avoid the repeated conjecture that she was upstaging the monarch. The newspapers accused Mrs Thatcher of ambulance-chasing and elbowing the Royal Family out of the limelight by dashing to be the first on the scene of disasters like the sinking of the ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* at Zeebrugge or the destruction of the Pan-Am airliner over Lockerbie. IRA outrages found the Prime Minister swiftly comforting victims. "She wanted to demonstrate solidarity with the people who suffered and to show that terrorists would never break British determination," an aide said.

Nonetheless, Downing Street was conscious of the impression that was being given and sensitive about it: there seems to have been a breakdown in communication between the Prime Minister and the Palace as to who should go where and when. "The Royal Family couldn't be relied on to go," a Thatcher aide said defensively, and indeed there was widespread resentment when Elizabeth did not go to the Lockerbie disaster area but sent Prince Andrew instead.

The impression persists among politicians and Commonwealth members that Elizabeth did act as a restraining influence on Mrs Thatcher in some of her more intransigently tactless moods. There is speculation that it was advice from the Palace which widened the celebration of the Downing Street anniversary from a dinner to which Mrs Thatcher and her Cabinet invited Elizabeth, an occasion with strictly party political overtones, to one to which all party leaders and descendants of former Prime Ministers were invited. Another occasion was the Cenotaph ceremony held on Armistice Sunday in Whitehall, at which the Queen and the leaders of the political parties lay wreaths. Mrs Thatcher originally refused to allow the newly formed SDP to take part. A leading member let it be known to the Palace the feelings of



The Queen and Mrs Thatcher: newspapers accused the PM of ambulance-chasing and elbowing the Royal Family out of the limelight

his party as being thus excluded.

Mrs Thatcher gave way.

Mrs Thatcher, however, could be obdurate on certain issues. Elizabeth would have liked to have visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg; her Prime Minister opposed the idea of giving royal countenance to that despised institution. Elizabeth did not go.

Mrs Thatcher's major innovation in British politics has been the fearless determination with which she set about attacking the sacred cows and ancient institutions of Britain. Doctors, lawyers, the universities, the trade unions, the nationalised industries, the BBC and the National Health Service — none of them escaped her reform-

ing zeal and her determination to cut costs, reduce public spending and get value for money for the taxpayer. It was only a matter of time before the same spotlight would be turned on the monarchy.

The free market economy, which Mrs Thatcher so cherished, ushered in a free-for-all in communica-

dominant share to be taken by her favourite press tycoon, the republican Rupert Murdoch. It is ironic that this most "loyal" of the Queen's Prime Ministers, whose attitude towards the monarchy was the most reverential, should have set in train a revolution in British life which would touch the Queen herself in the next decade.

Elizabeth's favourite Prime Minister

Churchill refuses a dukedom

CHURCHILL was Elizabeth's favourite Prime Minister. When he retired in 1955, she sent a handwritten letter telling him how much she missed him and how much she missed his successor, Anthony Eden, nor any other successor, "will ever, for me, be able to hold the place of my first Prime Minister, to whom both my husband and I owe so much and for whose wise guidance during the early years of my reign I shall always be profoundly so grateful".

This was not mere politeness, she meant it. Asked once which of her Prime Ministers did she enjoy audiences with most, she said: "Winston, of course, because it was always such fun." But when asked whether it had been like Lord Melbourne with the young Victoria, she replied, "Not at all... He could be very stubborn." Churchill, for his part, was described by one of the royal private secretaries as coming away from his audiences "purring". His reluctance to give up the pleasure of these weekly private talks as well as the reins of power was certainly a factor in the gloom with which he contemplated his resignation. The old man's romantic affection for Elizabeth nearly caused an embarrassing moment at his resignation audience with her on the day after the farewell Downing Street dinner.

It had been Colville's idea that since his service as Prime Minister had been so exceptional, it would be "appropriate" if he were to be offered an exceptional honour by the

Queen — a dukedom, just as his famous ancestor, John Churchill, had been made Duke of Marlborough for his services to the nation. The Palace reply was that no more dukedoms were ever going to be conferred, except on royal personages. As Colville wrote: "However, it did seem appropriate. Could I give the undertaking that the Prime Minister would refuse it?"

When Colville took soundings with Churchill, he found him adamantly opposed to it — he wished to die in the House of Commons as Winston Churchill. "I rushed to the telephone," Colville recalled, "and rang up Sir Michael Adeane and said that he could safely tell the Queen the dukedom could be offered." On the day, however, Colville had misgivings.

"I was greatly disturbed because as I saw the Prime Minister going off in his frock coat and his top hat and knowing, as I did, that he was



Churchill joins the Royal Family for VE-Day in 1945

madly in love with the Queen... I was rather alarmed that sentimental feelings might indeed have made him accept at the last moment. In which case, I knew both the Queen and Sir Michael would be very

angry with me for having given this pledge.

"When he returned from his audience, the first thing I said to him as we sat in the Cabinet room was 'How did it go?' With tears in his eyes he said, 'Do you know, the most remarkable thing happened — she offered to make me a duke.'"

"With trepidation I asked what he had said. 'Well, you know, I very nearly accepted. I was so moved by her beauty and charm and the kindness with which she made this offer, that for a moment I thought of accepting. But finally I remembered that I must die as I have always been — Winston Churchill. And so I asked her to forgive my not accepting it. And do you know, it's an odd thing, but she seemed almost relieved.'"

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TRAVEL

5

THE CARIBBEAN: Exotic islands in the sun are all any newlywed could want, says Matthew d'Ancona

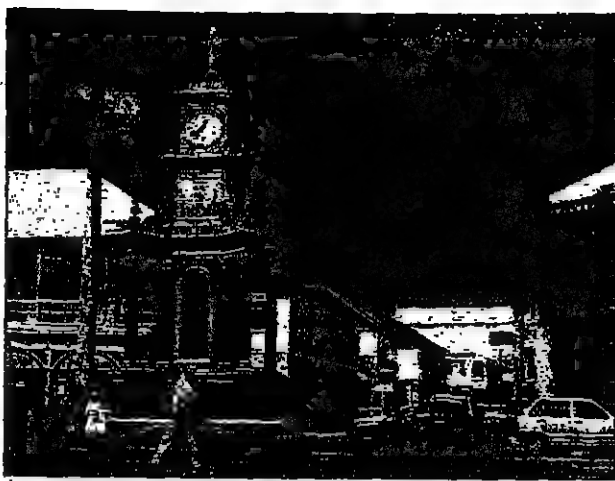
Love at the Golden Lemon

In the pleasurable frantic prelude to a wedding, it is hard to imagine life after the big day. So all-consuming are the preparations for the biggest event in your life that the idea of a "beyond" — a world in which invitations will not have to be printed, cars procured or floral arrangements selected — seems faintly ridiculous.

When Katherine, my then fiancée, and I first discussed where to go on honeymoon, it was to memories of holidays gone by that we first turned for inspiration: she to the gilded romance of Venice; I to the sassy, promiscuous, authentic jazz and earth-shattering cocktails of New Orleans.

In the end, a second sense prevailed and we chose the islands of the Caribbean for our first fortnight of wedded life. Obvious, perhaps. But there is no better moment to indulge in the obvious than the day after one's wedding. And what we wanted was a Rolls-Royce to pick us up from the airport, take us to a sun-bleached beach by a perfect blue ocean, with a ready supply of champagne and fine food, and leave us there for two weeks. This is exactly what happened.

Though Barbados — our first port of call — is what most Europeans mean by "Caribbean", it is in fact an Atlantic island, a tiny coral playground about 100 miles beyond St Lucia, St Vincent and the other Lesser Antilles. This is a small place where not very much happens. The lead item on the news while we were there was the anxiety of teenagers facing the common entrance exam — a story unlikely to make the Reuters wire. But that is the essence of the Barbadian (or Bajan) charm: a serious commitment to affable relaxation.



The sleepy streets of St Kitts lead to black volcanic beaches

The locals, we discovered, are more likely to compliment you on your luggage than to talk about politics.

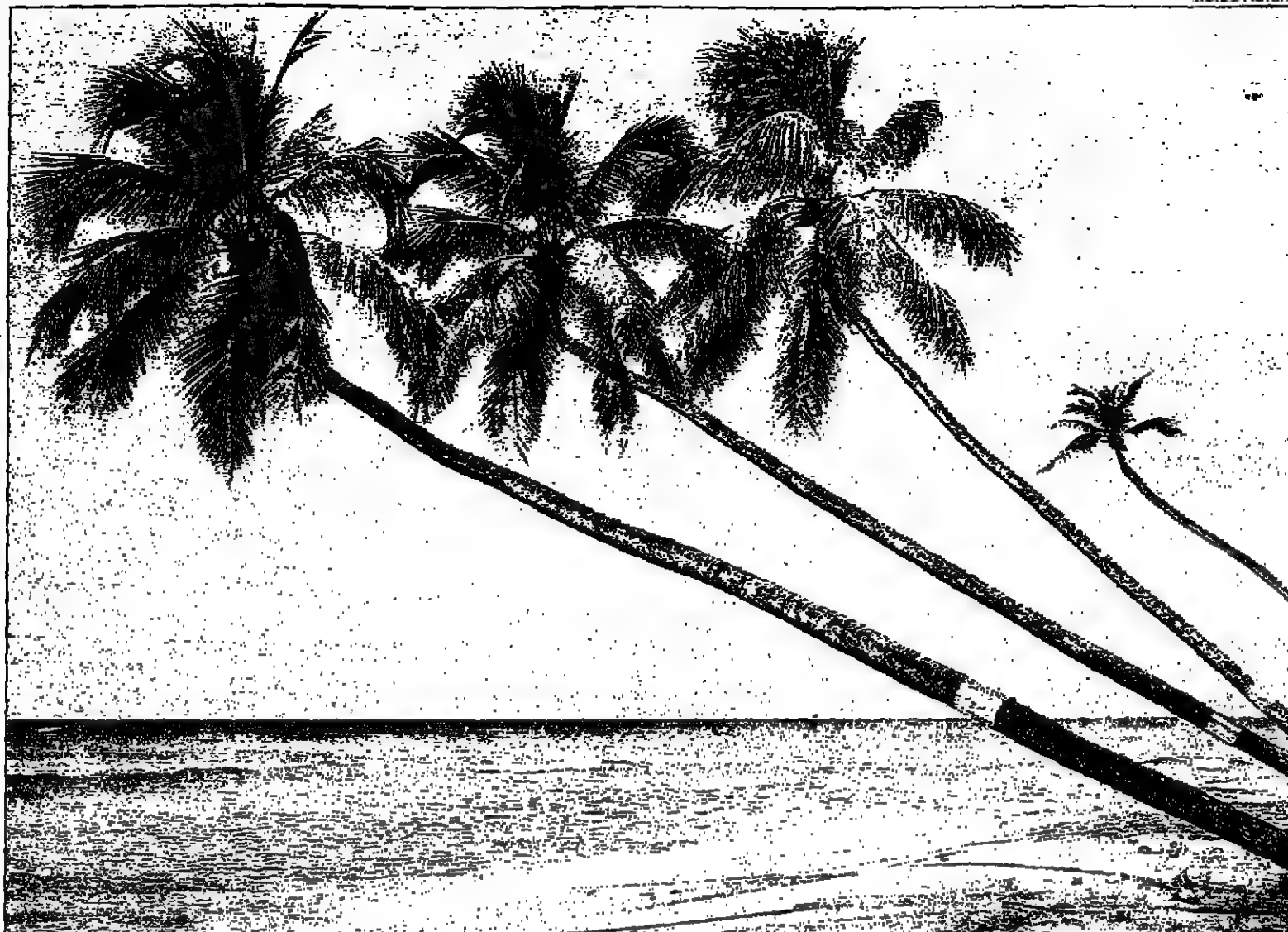
As a token gesture to active holidaying, we spent an afternoon on the *Atlantis* submarine, which leaves several times a day from the quayside at Bridgetown and dives 130ft to the reef on the west coast of the island, rich in exotic marine life. Should you wish to, you can spend a frenzied week snorkelling, scuba diving, wind-sailing, fishing and golfing. There is plenty to be done by those who insist on bringing the spirit of the workplace with them on holiday; but Barbados is not really their natural parish.

In truth, this is the home of those who understand how important it is to stay in a hotel where a fresh rum punch can be delivered to your spot on the beach by planting a flag in the sand. One such is the Sandy Lane, one of the few truly world-famous hotels, which offers a form of luxury that is as welcome at the start of the honeymoon as it is



predictable in nature. The spirit of the place, modern and self-indulgent, owes more to Michael Winner than Noël Coward. But that is just fine when one is looking for uncomplex relaxation, a place to acquire the beginnings of a tan and least on first-rate Bajan cuisine (try the barracuda, flying-fish or rich peppery stews on offer on the island, and have at least one lunch at the legendary Waterfront Café in Bridgetown).

A short drive from the Sandy Lane at St Peter is the more intimate Cobblers Cove, run by Hamish Watson, who



Coral playground: visitors can relax on sun-bleached beaches beside a perfect blue ocean, but there are plenty of watersports for the more active

greet all his guests with a rum "welcoming drink" of cosmic strength.

He berthed us in the Camelot Suite, which, with its own roof terrace and pool overlooking the ocean, is said by many to be the finest accommodation in the Caribbean. This is not a judgment with which we would quarrel. Looking out across a sea awash with the tangerine rays of a Caribbean sunset is an experience I shall never forget.

After the cosy modernity of

Barbados, one wants to see the slightly wilder side of the islands. We flew in a tiny plane to the sister islands of St Kitts-Nevis, staying first at the Golden Lemon and then at Nisbet Plantation. Everything is different there. The passport officials are more sceptical, the roads rockier, the landscape more rough-hewn.

The night we arrived on St Kitts was payday for the workers from the sugar-cane plantations and all was a frenzy of merriment on the streets of the island.

The black volcanic beaches there are a pleasing contrast to

the white sand of Barbados and the swimming is just as good. I was struck by how fine the dining was in the hotels we stayed at. But the Golden Lemon takes the palm d'or for a golden honeymoon, a wonderful stockade of chalets individually designed and decorated, most with a large plunge-pool of their own.

Looking out across the reef in the cooling heat of the late afternoon, I realised it would soon be time to go home. But to be there, newly married, still far from London and near only to my new wife — this was heaven.

Caribbean fact file

□ The author was a guest of Elegant Resorts.

□ Seven nights at Sandy Lane from £1,315 per person, including breakfast, return flights to Barbados and private car transfers. Seven nights at Cobblers Cove from £960 per person (no meals), flights included.

□ A seven-night stay on St Kitts and Nevis, spending three nights at the Golden Lemon (including breakfast) and four nights at Nisbet Plantation (half board) from £1,295 per person, including return flights to Antigua, inter-island flights and private car transfers.

□ Information and reservations: Elegant Resorts, The Old Palace, Chester CH1 1RB (01244 897999).

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TURKEY: Christine Wheeler revels in the simple pleasures of a hillside haven before the summer rush ...

Sanctuary under the mimosa trees

While Britain drooped in grey April drizzle, I sipped apple tea on a wooden veranda high on the hillside at Ocakloy, as the evening sun mellowed the vivid spring green of the plain below and melted the remaining hilltop snow. The only sounds were the irritated braying of a donkey and goats' bells plotting their homeward path to the whistled commands of their female minder, who was draped and covered in the Muslim way. A muezzin called villagers to prayer.

Ocakloy, a once deserted Turkish settlement, has been restored as a holiday village — but not manicured into an anonymous Euro-resort. Each cottage was almost hidden among geraniums, daisies and wild flowers, waist-high either side of the paths down the hillside to the restaurant, bar and pool. Acid yellow mimosa trees vibrated with the industry of bees.

The solar-powered cottages are basically furnished with subsistence-habitat: plain pine and unbleached calico,



decorated with kelim rugs and wall-hangings. The rural idyll was somewhat tarnished when the haughty cockerels, who patrol the paths with vigour, led their harem of hens to the verandas at daybreak for an alarm call. Tortoises, trundling in from the surrounding pine forest, sank down to sunbathe.

Although the cottages are not air-conditioned, to retreat to Ocakloy must be a relief in high summer when the nearby coastal resort of Olü Deniz seethes in heat that could stun a northern European into complete inertia. But, in late April, the thermometer showed mid-70s and — bliss — there were virtually no other visitors. A brief window of opportunity, before the season's start-gun goes off in May, for those of us whose mantra is: I am a traveller, you are a tourist, they pollute the area with beer cans and their very presence. A stroll along an almost deserted beach to the Blue Lagoon.

Turkey fact file

□ The author was a guest of Simply Turkey, Chiswick Gate, 506-608 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5RT (0181-747 1011; fax 0181-495 5344).

□ Ocakloy is closed in February and March for upgrading of cottages. Two weeks for two sharing one of the 25 cottages in April costs £474, self-catering. High season £597, self-catering. Breakfast about £5 per head; dinner about £7-£8 per head in the restaurant at Ocakloy.

□ There are two specialised botany tours, for up to 15 people, based at Ocakloy: two weeks starting April 7 for £785 per person half board; one week starting May 5 for £650 per person half board, both led by expert English botanists. There are two specialised archaeology tours for up to 15 people: two weeks starting April 14; two weeks starting September 22. £845 per person half-board and led by an expert from the Bodrum Museum. All prices include return flights to Dalaman.

where trees barely stirred and waves could hardly be bothered to flop on to the sand, took us past rows of empty parking spaces, snack bars and toll booths, silently awaiting the crowded chaos of summer.

Driving down the hillside in the village minibus brings you to Fethiye, a small port where café owners were sprucing up their windowboxes in readiness for the rush. Pottery and carpet shops were open, though customers few. We were offered unlimited supplies of apple tea but never hesitated to spend.

The package-tour caravan, moving relentlessly east, is but the latest in a long line of invasions and outside influ-

ences, and will re-shape the Turkish landscape and attitudes as surely as those of the Lycians, Greeks, Persians, Romans and Crusaders. Those ancient legacies still stand sentinel over the countryside, with carved Lycian tombs, some dating from the 5th century BC, common around Fethiye. Set high into sheer cliffs, as tall and wide as a small house, they seem inaccessible, but most were plundered soon after being sealed and remain broken, empty and sometimes graffiti-scarred.

Among the larger archaeological sites within driving distance of Ocakloy is Pinara with its Lycian tombs, Greek temples and amphitheatre. Another, Kaunos, is close by a



Only the gentle tinkling of goats' bells disturbs the peace at Ocakloy, where each cottage is hidden among the flowers

nature reserve where logger-head turtles hatch, and is accessible by boat from Dalyan, past biblical reed beds and basking terrapins: very Euphrates.

We climbed to the hilltop sites and traced Turkey's history from the ruins of these once important cities long ago destroyed by disease, war and earthquakes. The ruins are not completely excavated and still free from the intrusive 20th century trappings of tourism. Driving past farming hamlets where spring planting is

still done by hand, seedling by back-breaking seedling, we stopped at makeshift roadside cafés manned by free-enterprise villagers, and lounged like Istanbul pashas on cushions under awnings of vines, pomegranate, fig or walnut trees: welcome shade after walking through fields of poppies, anemones, buttercups and forget-me-nots soon to be sunbaked to a uniform brown.

And the Turkey I saw was never obscured by an oppressive heat haze or crocodiles of tourist buses.

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The city was created entirely of red sandstone by the Emperor Akbar in 1569 as his capital but was deserted 15 years later as the wells ran dry. See the Dargah-i-Azam and Dargah-i-Kutub where religious disputations also took place. See the palace that Akbar built for his son, Prince Salim, and the Jamini Masjid, the imperial mosque built in 1571 to commemorate Akbar's conquests in north India. Inside the white marble tomb of Shah Jahan, a Sufi who was held in high respect by Akbar and Jahangir. A full-day tour by motor coach including lunch: £24.00 per person.

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Travel to Jaipur for a two-night stay at Jaipur Spirit of Rajputra. See the Amber Fort, Lake Maota, the Palace of the Winds, the Observatory built by Jai Singh, and the city palace, a delightful blend of Moghul and traditional architecture. This covers over one-tenth of the total area of the walled city. A two-night tour including lunches: £29.00 per person.

All visits include transportation as applicable, entrance fees and local guides.

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TRAVEL

7

... and Brigid Callaghan sets sail on a gulet, while Brian MacArthur finds perfect peace of his own

Adrift on the sea of sighs

On board gulets, it is not just honeymoon couples who go to bed at 9.30pm. You wake at sunrise, as light and the sounds of the sea come through your portholes, and take the first swim of the day, in deep, clear sea, before breakfast at 7.30am.

Twelve hours later you will be dining on deck wondering how soon you can decently give in to exhaustion and retire to your cabin. The honeymooners, in fact, showed more resistance to going to bed than the rest, perhaps because the captain seemed to have taken advantage of the empty cabin next to them. On a gulet you can hear your neighbour's every sigh.

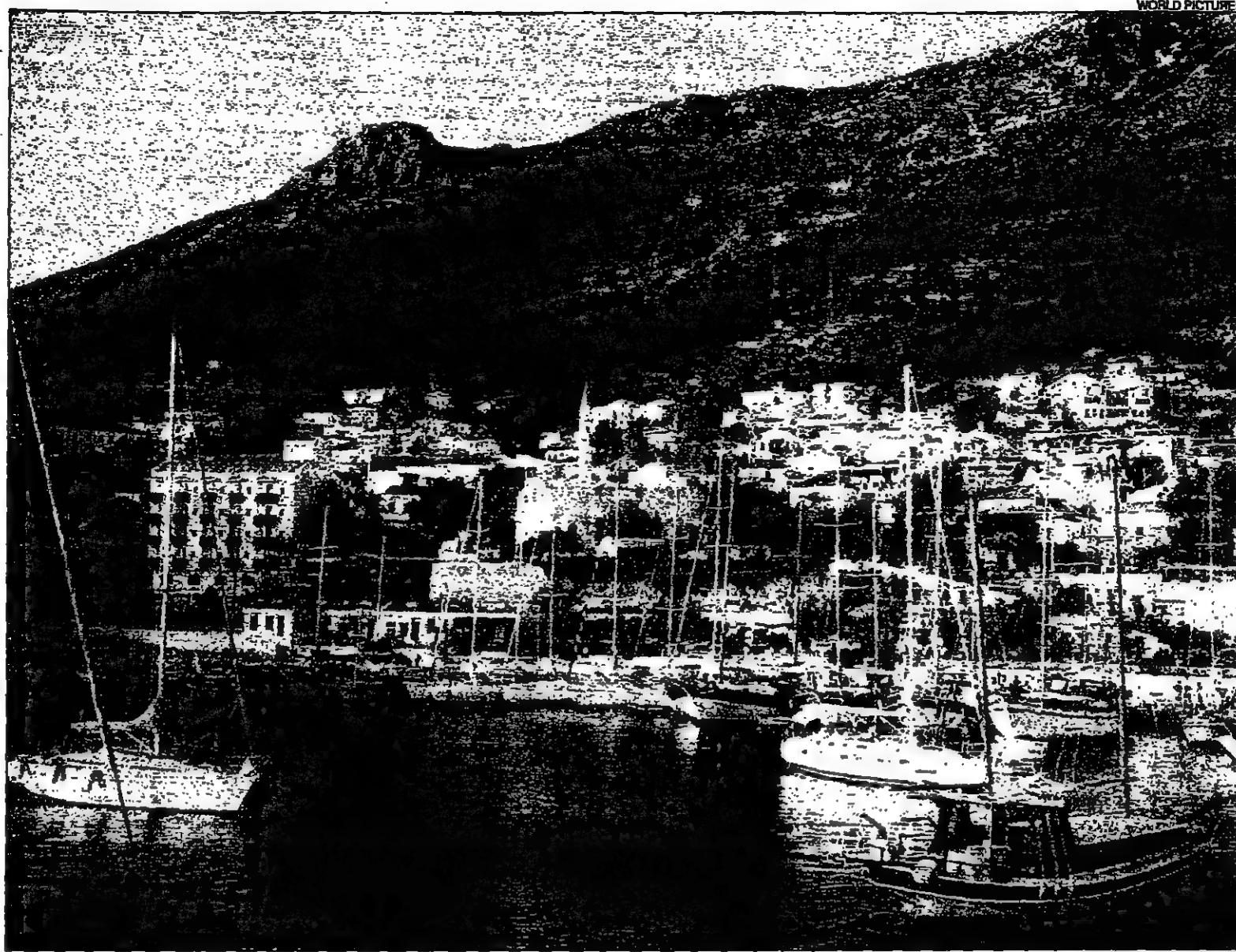
For first-time gulet cruises, a three-night trip is thoroughly recommended. It is short enough to allow any anxiety about cabin fever and long enough to appreciate the pleasures of the boat.

Cruise passengers usually begin their journey anxious to know which ports, harbours or beaches they will visit but often become so attached to their vessel that they prefer to stay on board rather than go ashore or inland.

On this trip, the balance of time on board and off was perfect. On the first day, a two-hour journey, with lunch on board on the way, from Kalkan on the southwestern, Mediterranean coast of Turkey, further south to Kas with time to explore the town and its carpet and jewellery shops, before setting off again at five o'clock to moor for the night in a bay just beyond, with a swim before supper.

Another two hours cruising the next day, with mountains as your backdrop at breakfast, past Kekova island with its sunken Byzantine city to Çayağzı, and onwards by minibus to Demre and the church of St Nicholas (aka Santa Claus) and to Myra, where you can visit a Roman amphitheatre surrounded by Lycian rock tombs. After swimming, and lunch on the boat, back up the coast to visit Kale, where huge Lycian sarcophagi rise out of the harbour and cluster on a plain below the castle, and rock tombs nestle next to village houses.

Then on the third day, waking in a bay just beyond Kale, you travel back up the coast with no shore stops but two blissful anchorages, one in deep, clear water between coast and islets and the other in a bay just beyond Kalkan, both with plenty for snorkellers to enjoy. On the morning of the last day, it is just half an hour's journey back to the harbour of Kalkan.



After supper in the Turkish village of Kalkan, take a stroll through narrow streets thronged with shops and have a nightcap overlooking the bay

We may have been lucky with our companionable fellow travellers but gulet regulars say that they have rarely known a disastrously unsuccessful mix on board.

The cautious could always pack a few cabins with friends. Sixteen people and three crew (captain, deckhand and cook) on board an 8ft boat is not as crowded as it might seem, and the shared breakfast/lunch/dinner table was a pleasure each day.

Food on board was excellent — light breakfasts, and lunches and suppers of pasta, rice or cracked wheat dishes with wonderful vegetables, salads and fresh fruit. After lunch "sunbathing", a euphemism for the afternoon nap, on sunloungers or sprawling cushions is a prelude to afternoon (Turkish) tea. So relaxed is life on this cruise that smart travellers arrive with only a small bag of essentials: —

□ The authors travelled as guests of Savile Row Tours & Travel. A three-night gulet "mini-cruise", from Thursdays to Sundays, departs weekly from Kalkan from May 2 to October 24. It is designed to be added on to holidays in Kalkan, Kas or Kale. Flights are from Manchester or Gatwick (about four hours) to Dalaman, a two-and-a-half hour drive from Kalkan.

□ Price: a three-night cruise, inclusive of meals, shore excursions, unlimited wine and soft drinks, in an air-

swimsuits, T-shirts, shorts, beach towel, toiletries. Shoes, needed only for trips ashore, are left in a basket on the aft deck.

Drawbacks seemed few: the lack of soundproofing, a surprising attack by vicious mosquitoes and, on the boat on which we travelled last year, pump-action lavatories that were not for the nervous. This year the cruises will be aboard a specially commissioned boat, the *Levanis*, which

boasts flush lavatories as well as air-conditioned cabins. The plus points are many: congenial company, guaranteed relaxation, comfort (wood-lined cabins with marvellous platform beds and ensuite shower room and lavatory), swimming and snorkelling several times a day and the chance to pick out future holiday destinations.

Kalkan, a busy, but not too busy, village, has plenty of charming places to stay but Kale is the place to take a house for a month in the autumn. Then the day-trip boats from Çayağzı are diminished, the days are still hot and the evenings cool enough to climb to the castle and look out to the beach on Kekova, on which the remains of a Byzantine chapel stand.

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Kalkan fact file

conditioned double cabin costs £175 per person in May and October, rising to £200 in July and August. A child sharing a cabin with two adults, costs £60 in May/October, £90 in July/August. Flights are not included in these prices. In May, June and October single occupancy of a cabin (they are all doubles) is half price and under-16s can have their own cabin at

half price if accompanied by two adults.

□ A week at the Patara Prince Hotel at Kalkan, including flight, transfer, room and breakfast, starts from £399. Savile also offers pansyion or self-catering accommodation in Kalkan, Kas and Kale. A self-catering week in a restored Greek cottage at Kalkan, with two sharing, starts from £379.

□ Savile Row Tours & Travel, Savile House, 6 Blenheim Terrace, St John's Wood, London NW8 0EB (0171-625 3001, fax: 0171-625 8852).

Lazy days, empty bays

Sitting in the sun on a balcony overlooking an empty bay, watching a solitary boat cruise slowly into the tiny harbour of Kalkan, I realised why Turkey was the country which experienced the biggest increase in British tourists last year.

This idyllic part of Turkey's Lycian coast was the most beautiful, unspoilt bit of the Mediterranean I had found in more than 30 years of travels in France, Spain, Italy and the bigger Greek islands.

All I could see were the Taurus mountains and, set at the heart of the bay, the still tiny village of Kalkan — 200 houses, with narrow, cobbled streets tumbling down to the restaurants on the sea front and surrounded by sloping, wooded hills.

The view from the balcony was from the elegant and exclusive five-star Patara Prince Hotel, part of the Club Patara complex situated on the hillside across the bay, which includes villas that can be rented separately. From Kalkan, Club Patara seems a jarring eyesore — although it will undoubtedly look better when it has aged and weathered and become part of the scenery.

The club, built six years ago, is modelled on a Roman town and includes a replica of the Roman triumphal arch that stands in nearby Patara, with a marble-floored Agora built round a fountain just inside the main entrance.

Once within, however, the experience is as if one were living in one of the villages perched in the Alps behind Nice, especially as you walk down through the terraces and the gardens of bougainvillea to swim or sunbathe from platforms by the sea.

Club Patara is its own

"village" with a main square, three restaurants and a café, three bars, two swimming pools, a sea sports and diving club, tennis club, health centre and sauna. All the rooms are air-conditioned, with balconies offering spectacular views out to sea and across to Kalkan.

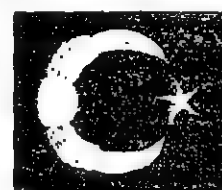
Kalkan has been saved from the over-development elsewhere in Turkey — even though a big new road from the airport is coming ever closer — by its desirous pebbled beach. There are superb beaches within a 15-minute drive at Kapitas and especially Patara, which offers more

than ten miles of beach in a lush, sheltered valley. At Kalkan, however, you can swim only from the rocks or at Lykia beach, a short boat ride across the bay, or from the Patara Prince Hotel. It is unlikely to get any big tourist hotels.

So this is a village for the traveller who wants a peaceful holiday, staying in small pensions and cot-

tages or the Patara complex, perhaps enjoying a gulet cruise for a few days or visiting the ancient sights nearby — including Kekova and the nearby sunken city, the ruins of Xanthos, the stunning canyon at Saklikent, the rock tombs of Myra, the hill caves of Pinara, the sea caves of Lykia or the ghost town of Kaya — mixed with lazy days of swimming and reading.

The day at Kalkan ends with an alfresco meal at one of the string of restaurants along the harbour, all amazingly cheap by English standards, and afterwards a stroll through narrow streets and alleyways thronged with shops, and a nightcap overlooking the bay. Peace, perfect peace.



Kalkan is for those who want a peaceful holiday

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TRAVEL

AMERICA: Leave the children behind — at Disney World you can drink, get married or have a wild time

Magic kingdom where adults can go goofy

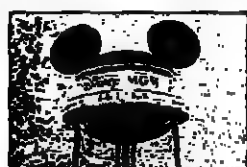
Walt Disney World without the kids? Surely the whole point of the 27,000-acre theme park resort outside Orlando in central Florida is all about giving the children a good time with Mickey Mouse and friends? Leaving them behind seems something that only Cruella de Vil would do, and perhaps even she wouldn't be so cold-hearted.

But apparently visiting the world's most popular tourist attraction — it pulls in about 30 million visitors a year, with approaching one million from Britain alone — is something that many people prefer to do without children. Four out of every ten adult visitors, according to Disney statistics, go without their offspring.

Adults on their own discover that there is more to the resort than just theme parks. Last weekend, for example, some 12,000 people joined in the annual Disney full-length marathon; later this month Disney is hosting its first Indy car race on a specially built track.

Disney World is also becoming the place for Americans to wed, and at least one British couple every week ties the knot there. And as a honeymoon destination, Disney World has overtaken the Caribbean and Far East.

But the clearest sign yet that Disney is not just for kids comes from the new Disney Institute opening shortly. This is a resort-within-a-resort which offers educational courses — everything from music appreciation to gourmet cooking — in a college-style campus with its own cinema, sports complex, bungalows and townhouses. Children under ten are not encouraged, while those up to age 17 are



Getting there

□ The author was a guest of Walt Disney World, staying at the Dide Landings Resort hotel. Prices, including return airfares, for seven nights for two adults sharing a room with a five-day admission pass each starts at £799 per person with Virgin Holidays (01293 617181). Or £815 per person with Bridge Travel Group (01992 456109). BA Holidays offers a seven-night package without passes at the same hotel for £609 per person (01293 723111).

□ A free Disney World video is available from 0990 000000.

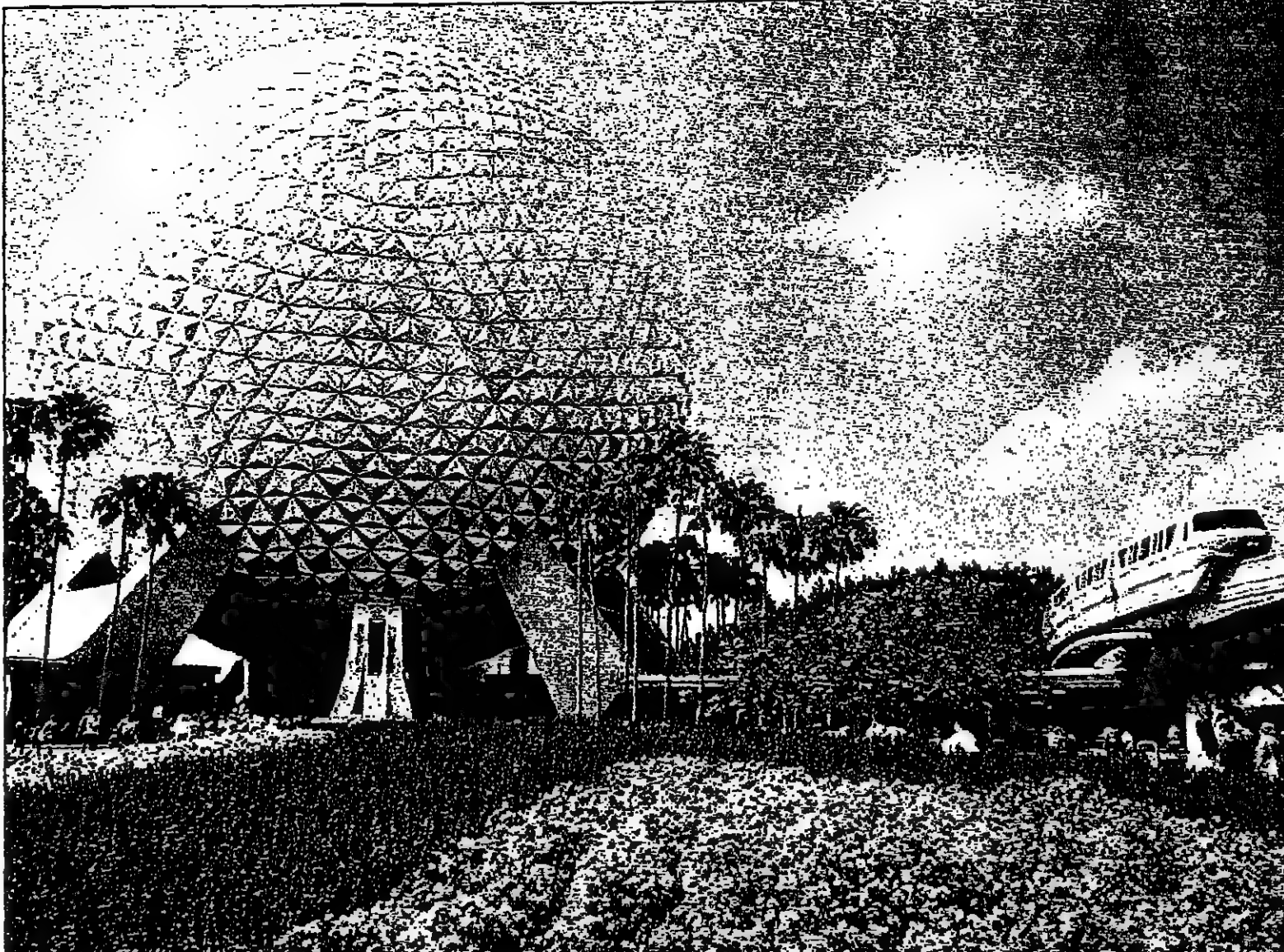
brakes its silver jubilee in October, and dominated by Cinderella's castle.

There are two problems with the Magic Kingdom if you are an adult on your own: there are too many children around and it is the only theme park that does not serve alcoholic drinks. Contrary to popular opinion, Disney is not dry: drink is served throughout Disney World apart from the Magic Kingdom. In fact Disney annually hosts a prestigious wine festival of American-produced wines.

Of course you have to go to the Magic Kingdom, but many of the attractions are tame for adults, and the queues — especially for the rides in Fantasyland, which you can miss out entirely — can be horrendous. Make a quick tour of the park to capture the flavour of the quintessential Disney experience but head for Space Mountain, still regarded as the top ride.

Something of an enigma, the ride is slow (just 28mph) and the track has none of the twists, turns and loops that make virtually every other rollercoaster a more scary experience. (The Disneyland Paris version, for example, sends you upside down three times.) But what sets Orlando's Space Mountain apart in the folklore of rollercoasters is the fact that not only does it operate in almost total darkness, but Disney's skill in building up the tension to what, in daylight, would be a very tame ride indeed.

The only other rollercoaster in Disney World is Big Thunder Mountain. Ride it at night when the evening parade is on and try to get in the last third of the train, where the experi-



Spaceship Earth at Epcot, one of Disney's theme parks where the Future World attractions are designed to appeal to older children and adults

ence is more thrilling. The other ride not to be missed is Splash Mountain, although you have to endure a lot of audio animatronic rabbits and bears singing "Zip-a-dee-doo-dah" before you get to the 52ft drop at 40mph down a water chute.

Having exhausted the Magic Kingdom by mid-afternoon, catch a small ferry across to the Grand Floridian Hotel and head for the bar at Narcoossee's, where you can sit in peace overlooking the man-made Seven Seas Lagoon with a quiet beer.

Alternatively, and especially at night, try the bar at the new California Grill restaurant (evocative of the style of London's Caprice) on top of

the hideous-looking Contemporary Resort Hotel. The view stretches across the Magic Kingdom and is a great place to watch the nightly fireworks.

The other two major theme parks — Epcot and the Disney/MGM Studios — pose no problems for adults since they are aimed to appeal to older children and adults alike. Epcot is in two halves: Future World, which has a series of pavilions depicting technological progress, although the problem is that the pace of change is so fast that they soon become dated. The Universe of Energy, for example, still presents nuclear energy as the great panacea for economic growth although, thankfully, the attraction is being revised this year with the gun-bo promotion of a nuclear world torn down.

If you want a laugh, watch the Making of Me film in the Wonders of Life pavilion to see how Disney manages to avoid

any meaningful attempts at sex education. The second half of Epcot is World Showcase, 11 national pavilions in a sort of mini-world's fair located around a lagoon. Best places for a relaxing drink: try a frozen Margarita overlooking the water by the Mexican pavilion, or have a home-from-home pint of beer (Bass) at the Rose & Crown pub in the imitation United Kingdom.

The Disney/MGM Studios show how movies are made and what it is like to be in them. A very adult park with the best attraction being the revamped Twilight Zone Tower of Terror which drops you down a 13-storey lift shaft, twice.

Night-time fun for adults at Disney World centres on Pleasure Island, an evening entertainment complex with seven clubs — ranging from a comedy club to a Stringfellows-

style disco — and several restaurants. Children are allowed into most of the clubs but you have to prove that you are over 21 to get a drink. (Carry your passport with you, even if you know you won't see the right side of 30 again.)

Perhaps recognising that its culture does not easily encourage the raucous and sophisticated catering that such a complex needs, Disney is this year importing outside restaurants to liven the place up, including celebrity eateries established by such stars as Gloria Estefan, Dan Aykroyd and Jim Beush.

The existing ten-screen cinema complex is being expanded with an additional 14 screens, and other nightclubs are planned. Also opening this summer is a second entertainment complex called Disney's BoardWalk, close to Epcot, which is seeking to recreate the American amusement parks of the 1930s and 1940s,

such as the one at Coney Island, New York.

The Disney experience is not to everyone's taste, and the absence of children with you forces an evaluation of just what else the resort has to offer. Disney is committed to broadening its appeal to all ages, believing that the future trend in holidays is towards a more controlled and secure environment where the thrills are carefully rationed, and every aspect of the experience can be defined.

Not surprisingly, the next big expansion at Disney World is the Wild Animal Kingdom in 1998. Among the many attractions it will offer is an African safari but with audio animatronic animals rather than the real thing. And with only just over a third of Disney World's available land developed so far, there is a lot more to come.

DAVID CHURCHILL

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DAY 8 Stockholm - London with SAS. Alternatively, stay on for a few days in Stockholm.

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TRAVEL

9

POLAND: Rural tranquillity and urban grandeur in a region possessed by the memories of modern history

Ghosts of war and peace

Only after I returned from northeast Poland did I realise what had so baffled, even troubled, me. It was this: how could a landscape which has been a crucible of almost constant turbulence in our century still appear to be frozen in another, more timeless and tranquil, age? It is a paradox that recurs wherever one turns in this absorbing country.

In Poland, as the historian Simon Schama says, frontiers have marched back and forth to the command of history. Nowhere is this more so than in the north east, on which soil — at various times Lithuanian, German and Russian as well as Polish — so much modern history has been enacted. Here Russian military disaster at Tannenberg in 1914 helped to provoke revolution; here 30 years later in the Wolfshanz, or Wolf's Lair, Hitler came face to face with defeat; here, in the shipyards of Gdansk, the seeds were sown for the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

And yet on an early summer's day, these same fields of former east Prussia showed a scene unchanged and pastoral: a horse pulling the plough, a peasant farmer and his wife working shoulder to shoulder in the field and, near by, their cottage, its interior dark and low but welcoming around the wood-burning tile stove in the kitchen.

I had gone to northern Poland at the invitation of an old friend, a former colleague turned innkeeper in the lake region of Kashubia. It seemed an improbable destiny for a journalistic veteran of the conflicts in Beirut and El Salvador but, at ease among the neighbouring farmers, exchanging jokes in Polish — a language in which the constants tumble into one another in impenetrable confusion — he was clearly at home.

The village in which we were staying lay half an hour's drive west of Gdansk. This Hanseatic gem, formerly Danzig, saw the opening shots of the Second World War — a German battleship opening fire on the city some hours before Hitler's army invaded. Nevertheless, the city weathered the war passably well until 1945, when

it was utterly destroyed in the Russian advance.

Adam Koperkiewicz, head of the local history museum, is justifiably proud of the work that has restored Gdansk to something approaching its former glory. Now that the Dutch-style façades along the lovely Market Square have been rebuilt, and the ghosts of Nazi and Soviet oppression banished, he and other influential local citizens are looking to Gdansk's millennium celebrations in 1997 as an opportunity to prove that the city can recapture the spirit of cosmopolitan culture and ethnic tolerance it once enjoyed at the heart of the Hanseatic League.

Artus Court epitomises old Danzig. One of the most handsome of the baroque 16th-century structures in Market Square, it was the forum of local merchants and civic leaders and was named in honour of the ideal of communal living represented by Arthurian legend. The large and magnificent tile stove in the corner, only recently restored, is like a vast multi-layered wedding cake, composed of hundreds of portraits of local burghers: Christians, Jews and even Muslims. According to Dr Koperkiewicz, when a king of Poland once chided the Danzigers for being too susceptible to outside influences, they pointed to the stove as evidence of the strength of diversity.

Reminders of the turmoil of the past are never far away, however. A few minutes' walk from the street café of the old port and the stalls selling Baltic amber stands the shipyard monument to the memory of workers killed in the anti-communist riots of 1970. Ten years

later, the Solidarity union was formed and the Soviet empire was presented for the first time with an immovable dissident force.

Today's visitor searches in vain for a whiff of those heady days. The shipyard where workers confronted the communist state is barely in operation. Business at the Solidarity souvenir booth was so slack that the woman behind the counter became positively animated at the approach of potential customers, but all she had on show were a few old *Solidarność* badges. Even the spiritual home of the struggle, St Bridget's Church, where Lech Walesa and other Solidarity activists sheltered and worshipped, had an abandoned air, being closed during the week.

A far more potent landscape lies about four hours' drive to the east, in the lake region of Mazuria.

To reach Hitler's bunker at the Wolfshanz you have to hire a car, but the journey there is repaid by an encounter with perhaps the last remaining architectural artefact with the troubling power to lay bare Nazi psychology.

Once again the paradoxes are haunting. The road to this monument to evil winds through achingly lovely country, the landscape of Schubert's *Winterreise* and Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, rye fields that sway in the breeze and forests of beech, oak and linden. Many of the lakes of Kashubia and Mazuria, great rents in the countryside left by glaciers, contain water pure enough for human consumption. As Malbork stands a medieval castle, built around 1270 by the Teutonic Knights, which retains a moat and drawbridge.

The road to Hitler's bunker is through rye fields and forests

Amid this pastoral scene, as early as 1940 Hitler began building his headquarters for the eastern front. To maintain the secrecy of the project, thousands of slave-labourers employed in its construction were silenced. Their bodies, along with the countless dead of Tannenberg, are enfolded in the soil of Mazuria.

Three days after invading Russia in June 1941, Hitler moved to the Wolfshanz and remained there almost constantly until late 1944. The lair then had the population of a small town, although covering only a few acres and concealed in thick forest near Kertzyń. The site is chillingly apt. As Schama has written in *Landscape and Memory*, while in the Polish psyche forests have traditionally represented the struggle for national freedom, in Germany they embodied the militaristic spirit.

Besides barracks, a communication centre, a secretarial room and a cinema, the lair consists of the personal bunkers of senior Nazis: Göring, Jodl, Keitel and Hitler himself. Built on a pharaonic scale, these hideous monoliths testify to Nazi paranoia. Although never in fact attacked — Hitler was long gone by the time the Russians swept through — they were built to withstand Armageddon. Walls and ceilings were made of steel-reinforced concrete 30ft thick, and the captors' attempts to blast it into oblivion were a failure.

So, tragically, was the belated German opposition to Hitler. A plaque near the entrance to the complex marks the spot where a bomb left by Count Claus von Stauffenberg in a conference room exploded on July 20, 1944. Hitler's survival meant more lives were lost in the last year of war than had died in the previous five.

In time, no doubt, this remote and disturbing site will be developed as a tourist attraction. At present, one emerges alone from the ruins into the sunlight, and gives thanks for the comparative blessings enjoyed by our own islands in this turbulent century.

STEPHEN TAYLOR



A Solidarity monument in Gdansk. The city was destroyed in the Russian advance of 1945

Poland: how to get there, where to stay

□ The author was a guest of Lot Polish Airlines (0171-580 5037), and Kamia Lodge, Kartusy (tel/fax: 00 48 90502748). Lot flies direct from Heathrow to Gdansk on Saturdays in winter, with an additional flight on Monday from April; also daily to Warsaw. Off-peak return £215 to Gdansk.

□ Kamia Lodge, near Gdansk, offers rooms on the banks of a Kashubian lake, self-catering or with meals. £280 per week for a couple in a one-bed apartment in summer, £180 in winter; £415 for a two-bed apartment in summer, £270 in winter. Contact Kamia Lodge, Skrz. Pocz. 5, 83-900 Kartusy, Poland.

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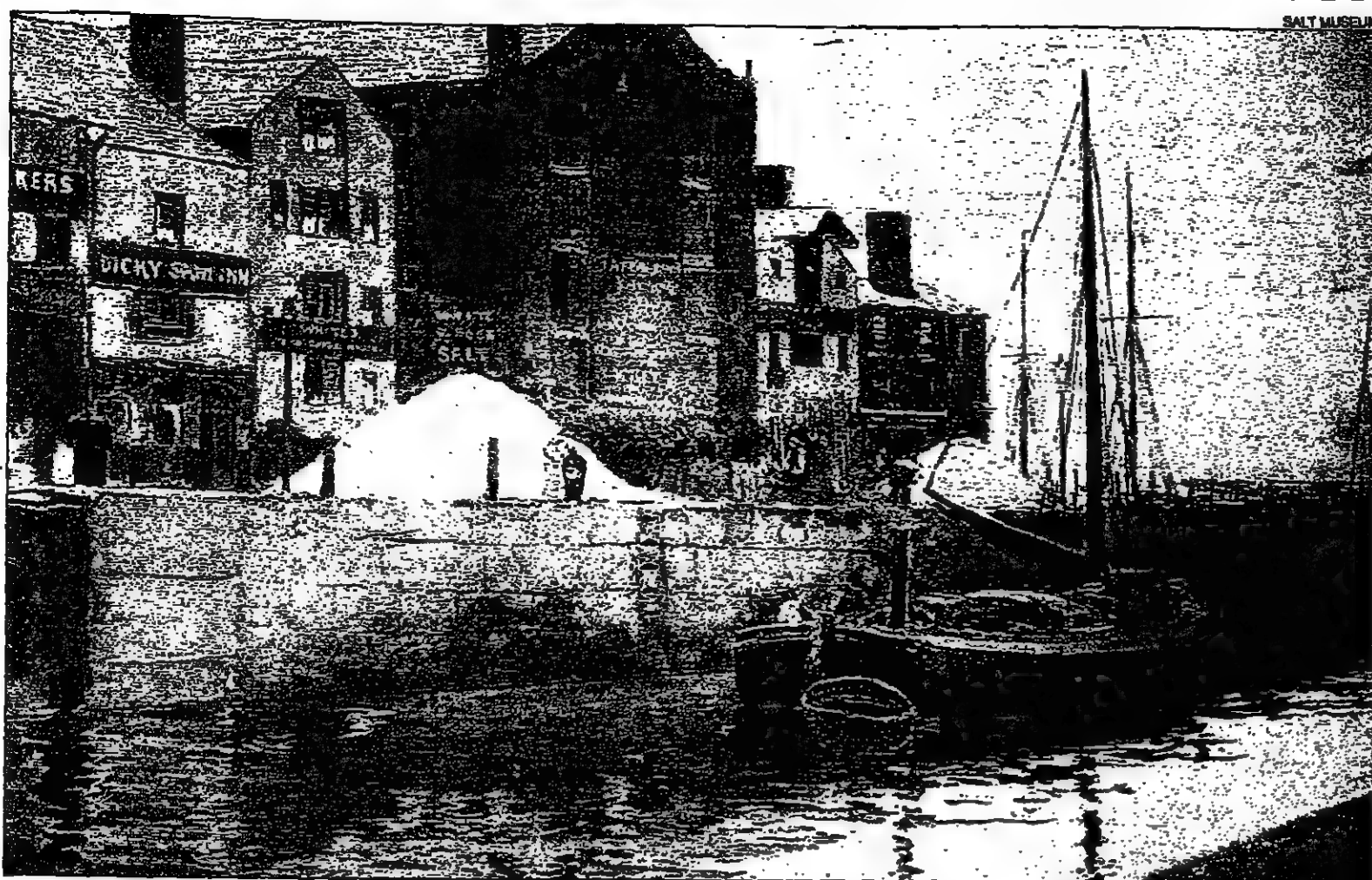
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TRAVEL

11

CHESHIRE: On the Salt Trail, which dates from Roman times; and a walk around enchanted Alderley Edge



For centuries Cheshire's salt trade relied on barges for transport — from a painting by Carlton Grant (1885) at the Salt Museum

Exploring the crystal maze

In 1880, there were 800 salt pans in Northwich, turning the town into a giant cauldron of steam and smoke, as coal fires boiled the brine. The last pan closed in 1928, but we saw one being restored at the Lion Salt Works, midway along the Salt Trail. Cheshire's Salt Trail is triangular and takes in Winsford, Middlewich and Northwich, 13 miles by car or six hours' chugging by boat.

But the points of most interest — the Salt Museum, Anderton Boat Lift, Lion Salt Works and Northwich town centre — lie in a much smaller area and can be visited on foot.

The fine mansions of the salt barons in Cheshire are still there, although you have to hunt for them — they have been put to other uses. There, too, are the terraces of neat little Victorian houses where the workers used to live.

There are still salt pans to be found — rectangular lead or iron troughs, where brine was boiled to make the most valuable "white" salt — and salt houses, where temperatures caused men strip to the waist and women to the petticoat, despite Victorian prudery.

The pubs in which they rehydrated between shifts (giving Northwich the sobriquet "town of drunks") still retain their names — the Salt Barge, the Salt House — if not their Victorian character.

Ask inside and you may still meet a retired "waller" (he raked the crystals to the edge of the brine pan), hunched over a pint, or a "lumpman" (who compressed crystals into tubs of elm).

The odd beam or steam-engine still exists, oiled and polished with modern owner's pride. Once, they raised tubs, or pulled wagons along the "mineral line" out of Northwich, or powered barges laden with salt along the waterways. A million tonnes a year used to be moved in that way, but the flat-bottomed sailboats have all rotted away.

The tools of the salt industry turn up occasionally in antique shops: skimmers for straining brine; wooden muddling pegs (like cricket bats) for tamping salt down in the elm tubs; hoppers for smoothing the sides of blocks; and chipping paddles for de-scaling the pans.

We stayed at the centre of the triangle, in a Friendly Floater (floating hotel) on the River Weaver, in which the cabins offer fine views of two 19th-century, electrically powered swing bridges — the first to be built in Britain.

Our trail began at the museum, once a workhouse, now a brightly lit, well-displayed record of the industry. Interactive videos, working models (some life-size), artefacts and clearly captioned photographs tell the whole story from Roman times to the present day. Photographs re-

veal the conditions under which men and women worked in Victorian times: in intense heat, clouds of steam, slippery catwalks and unguarded pans (workers had to call to each other constantly to make sure nobody had fallen into the boiling brine) — for paltry wages.

Salt is still extracted from brine in Cheshire through solution mining, where water is pumped underground and then pumped back to the surface. The extraction is done inside stainless steel vacuum evaporators, which can be viewed by appointment.

Mining is still carried on at Meadowbank, near Winsford, and visitors are welcome. More than 100 miles of tunnels lie underground and about 2.25 million tons of amber-coloured rock salt are brought up each year.

Cheshire's salt is moved by road, rail or pipeline today, but for centuries it went by barge. That tradition took us to the Anderton Boat Lift which is being restored. This was where boats were lifted between the Mersey and Trent Canal and the River Weaver. There are numerous shallow flashes — freshwater lakes — frequented by anglers and interesting species of wildlife, which cover collapsed, subterranean salt workings. The first mine owners, in their head-

long rush to make fortunes, ignored the dangers they were leaving behind.

As more and more brine was pumped in or salt extracted, so the supporting salt pillars dissolved, until the tunnels collapsed. Roads and bridges cracked, buildings tipped or even toppled.

Nowhere was the damage greater than in Northwich town, where a honeycomb of more than 250 brine shafts and mines has been mapped by the Brine Compensation Board, set up in 1891 and still paying out sums ranging from £100 to £200 for subsidence damage (an average of 100 claims a year since 1900).

The Victorians built timber-framed buildings which could be moved to safer locations. About 50 of these survive in Northwich: our final stop was Bridge House. Once an inn, in 1913 it was moved 100 yards on rollers without a single pane of glass breaking. But the Subsidence Trail is another story.

PETER FAIRLEY

● The author was a guest of the Friendly Floater (01606 44443). Rooms £41-£58.

● The Salt Museum (01606 41331) is open Tues-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat, Sun 2-5pm.

● The Lion Salt Works (01606 41823). Open 1.30-4.30pm daily (10.30am-4.30pm in July and August).

● Boats can be hired from Middlewich Narrowboats (01606 832400) at £60 a day.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 27

WHACKO

(c) A schoolboy exclamation or ejaculation of delight or excitement. Splendid! Excellent! Good show! Horrified! It must have something to do with whack. "After all it was only two days to — whack! — Monday."

SETTECENTO

(a) The eighteenth century considered as a period of Italian art, architecture, music, etc. Italian, short for *mil settecento*, 1700. Aldous Huxley, *Olive Tree*, 1936: "It is a scene from a settecento Earthly Paradise — before the Fall of 1789."

SEKT

(c) A German sparkling white wine, sometimes described as champagne, to the rage and writs of the French vintners of champagne, many of whom were ancestrally German. From the German word, *cf. sack*.

WILIWI

(c) A coral tree, *Erythrina sandwicensis*, of the family Leguminosae, native to Hawaii and Tahiti and bearing clusters of orange flowers. The Hawaiian name. "The very soft, white wood of the wiliwili is still used by the natives for outriggers on their fishing canoes."

A spell in the woods

Spooky places attract spooky people, which is why a group of Nottingham University students had gathered at Alderley Edge, Cheshire. Sporting funny beards, clad in black cloaks and wielding wooden swords, they were planning to run around the woods in an energetic version of *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Their peculiar pastime was inspired by a local legend about a wizard who bought a white horse from a farmer travelling to Macclesfield market. The horse was bought to complete the wizard's cavalry, a sleeping army in a nearby cave which could spring to the country's defence if need be. The cave has never been identified, but the myth draws legions of visitors to these National Trust woodlands.

Indeed, it is an ideal spot for a post-Sunday lunch expedition. The network of paths through the Scots pine and beech trees are well-signposted, easily navigable (some are suitable for wheelchairs and prams) and never too far from a car park. Most paths lead to Stormy Point, a cliff of red rocks from where there are breath-taking views of the Pennines. A stone records that the woods were given to the trust in 1948 by the daughters of Lawrence and Mary Pilkington, who enjoyed a constitutional stroll on clement days.

As you follow their example, you will spot repeated mythical references — Druid's Circle, Devil's Grave, and Wizard's Well. But don't expect too much from these landmarks — the well is an unimpressive stone sink with a laminated drip, masquerading as a font of mystical powers. This sight should not distress you unduly if you turn round and enjoy the cottage-studded vista in front of you.

From the well, progress to the steeper environs of Castle Rock, a wonderful natural rock staircase. "You can see Blackpool Tower from here on



Where wizards once wandered: Alderley Edge in Cheshire

a good day," I was informed by an eight-year-old boy, who should know these things. Head south towards the Ar-mada Beacon, one of a chain lit to signal the arrival of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

A spectacular network of mines lies underneath the woods. Usually closed, these were opened on the weekend I was there by the Derbyshire Caving Club, which occasionally organises group visits.

I spent a fascinating hard-hatted hour navigating a network of damp tunnels, guided by a man who spent his spare weekends unearthing buried passages. This is not a trip for those who might find the deep drops, narrow gaps and low tunnels a bit much. Those who do venture in will find themselves exploring vaults straked with the dramatic blue and green of malachite and azurite, two copper ores.

Up above, another pleasant diversion is to stray just over a mile — down Artist's Lane and south on the A34 — to Nether Alderley, which has one of the prettiest flour mills in England. It must be one of the oldest too — a mill has stood here since 1391. It is run by

David Mosley, who said that the mill only operated in daylight. "You couldn't have candles in here because flour dust is like gunpowder," he says. "The place would have gone up like a powder keg." If the water levels are high enough, you may be treated to the sight of the mill in action. If the mill operated at full speed for eight hours, it would produce three tonnes of flour. And, during that time, nearly 180,000 gallons of water would flow through the wheels.

If the walk doesn't tire you out, the numbers will.

ANJANA AHUJA

● The author was a guest of the Laburnum Cottage Guest House, Mobberley, Cheshire WA16 7PU (tel/fax 01545 872464), which has won six awards in five years. Room prices start at £28 for a single, £48 for a twin or double, including breakfast.

● Alderley Edge is off the Macclesfield Road (B5267). Admission free. Private visits to the local mines can be arranged by Derbyshire Caving Club (tel/fax 01457 534772).

● Nether Alderley Mill is open from April to October, times vary, £1.80, children 90p. NT membership free. Telephone 01743 709343 for information.

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Thomas Cook

BOOKS

■ **SINAI**
By William Smethurst
Headline, £16.99

This is a ripping yarn that sets the new batch of 1996 thrillers off at a cracking pace. The Book of Exodus will never seem the same again.

PETER MILLAR

Ce n'est pas la guerre: Greenpeace's flagship, *Rainbow Warrior*, sunk by French intelligence agents in Auckland harbour in July 1985

Cloaque and dagger

This last is not new: letter-opening services, the so-called *cabinets noirs*, date back to the 16th century; and Victor Hugo, in exile in Guernsey in the time of Napoleon

The golden era for French intelligence was the First World War when its military branch was probably the best of all the armies at cryptanalysis, wireless eavesdropping and codebreaking.

En passant, the author demolishes the myth of the Resistance, preferring, to Eisenhower's exaggerated claim that it was worth six divisions to the Allies, Speer's comment: when asked what the effect of the French Resistance had been, he replied, "What French Resistance?"

gence services, de Gaulle and his presidential successors have tended to set up parallel systems, leading to such discordant episodes as the exploitation of the former French in Africa and *l'affaire Rainbow Warrior*.

Lucidly and elegantly written, this is a brilliant and fascinating work which goes beyond the brief set out in its title. Porch not only ruminate abstractly on the functions and methods of intelligence but also, in keeping with his dictum that "intelligence can only be judged in the context in which it operates", illuminates, from an unusual angle, French politics and military operations. Most intriguing, perhaps, is his statement that the "base aérienne" at Dien Bien Phu was established not with a military aim, but in order to protect the opium harvest — both sides needing the profit from it to finance their operations.

Brian Alderson on a sister's memoir of a remarkable publishing entrepreneur

That remark points up the second element of Walker's magic: his ability to get his authors and illustrators to work above themselves and then to see that they got as healthy a cut of the profits as

Cecil gives only a sketchy indication of these multiple successes, relying for examples on the names immediately recognizable to most, such as Helen O'Conbury, Nicola Bayley and Martin Handford. *Where's Walley?* and its successors sold by the million. As is only right, she is chiefly concerned with the character behind the enterprise, and a clear-eyed job she



Walker: perfect guiding touch

How far this caused, or was caused by, his homosexuality is beyond explanation, but after all the jaunts and deals and dinners, the belief remains that Prospero was most at ease when trying to wrestle perfection out of a *Chopin nocturne*. There is poignancy in that which is brought to a moving intensity in Cerd's final account of her brother's death from an Aids-related illness.



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Geoffrey Church, left, and Ben Porter get to grips with *Macbeth*

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Today we publish the first part of our list with details of shows available in London and the South. A listing of participating theatres in other parts of Britain will appear in Monday's *Times*.

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BATH

Theatre Royal 01225 443844 *Hydrata Harry Goodman* with Aisling O'Sullivan, Tim Parnell and Fred Pearson, Jan 30 and 31 - £15 and £18

BRACKNELL

White Theatre* 01344 484 123 *Bali* to New York, with Christie Sabin and Sandy, Feb 12 at 7.30pm - £5/£7.50/£2/£9.50.

The Bacchae - Dancing with a Tyrant, Jan 28, 29, 30 at 7.30pm - £5/£7.50/£2/£9.50.

BURY ST EDMUNDS

Theatre Royal 01284 789 365 *Object Conscious/Glass Witches*, Feb 17 at 7.30pm - £5/£5. *Three Sisters/The Break of Day*, Mar 4/5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 at 7.30pm - £5/£5. *Twelve Angry Men*, Mar 7 to 14 - £5/£7/£11.50/£14/£17.50

BRISTOL

Old Vic* 0117 987 7877 *Mad As A Hatter*, Feb 8 to 15 - £5/£7/£11.50/£14/£17.50

Twelve Angry Men, Mar 7 to 14 - £5/£7/£11.50/£14/£17.50



Anita Dobson and Kate Ashfield play two in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*

Mad Men and *Her Merry Men*, April 12 to 18 - £5/£7.50/£11.50/£14/£17.50

An Enemy of the People, May 10 to 18 - £5/£7.50/£11.50/£14/£17.50

Quakers Fri 0171 969 7795 *Double Jeopardy*, rehearsed reading not the full production, Jan 26 and 27 - £5.

SOURMOUTH

Poplark Theatre 01202 292787 *Beauty and the Beast*, with the Russian All Stars, April 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 - £8.50/£12.50/£16.50

CHELMSFORD

Cine Theatre* 01245 485 028 *Out of Order*, Jan 26 to Feb 2 all performances except Sat evening - Tues, Thurs/Sat matinee: £3 and £8.75, concs £5.75 and £4.50; Fri evening £8 and £8.75, no concs.

The Matchless of George III, Feb 29 to Mar 9, concs: Sat evenings, Tues/Wed/Sat matinee: £5/£5.75; Fri evening: £5/£5.75, no concs.

EPSOM

Pavlova* 01372 742 555 *Arabian Nights*, Jan 26, 7.30pm, Jan 27 at 2.30pm and 7.30pm - £12.50. Dancers from Christopher Gable's Central School of Ballet, Apr 2 at 7.30pm - £11.50. *The Wind in the Willows*, Feb 26 to Mar 2 at 7.30pm - £10. *Flemenco*, Feb 26, Mar 4 at 8.00pm - £10. *Shakespeare's The Winters Tale*, Feb 12 and 13 at 7.30pm - £10

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

The Old Town Hall* 01462 242 857 *The House of Bernadette*, Feb 20 to 26 at 8pm - £5. *The Man Who Ate His Shoes*, Feb 2, at 8pm £5.

HORNCHURCH

Queen's Theatre* 01708 443 333 *Face - The Musical With Bottle*, Feb 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 20, 22, 8.00pm - £9.50/£10.50/£12.50

Steel Magnolias, Mar 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21 at 8.00pm - £8.50/£10.50/£12.50

Plan 9 From Outer Space, Apr 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18 at 8.00pm - £8.50/£10.50/£12.50

The Railway Children, Apr 30 to May 2, May 7, 8, 14, 15, 16 at 8.00pm - £8.50/£10.50/£12.50

ILFORD, ESSEX

Kenneth Mann Theatre* 0181-583 4465 *Dick Whittington, any Wed/Thurs/Fri until Feb 2, 7pm - £7.50.*

It Runs in the Family, Feb 7, 8, 9, 8pm - £5.25. *The Late Mrs Early*, Feb 14, 15, 8.00pm - £5.25.

Solo by Solo by Sondheim - Musical Review, Feb 23 and 24, 8pm - £5.25.

PAIGNTON

Festival Theatre 01808 598841 *Beauty and the Beast*, *Humpty All Humpty*, Feb 27, 28 and Mar 1 at 7.30pm, Feb 29 and Mar 2 at 2.30pm and 7.30pm - £18.50/16.50/£12.50/£7.50/£5.50.

POOLE

Poole Arts Centre* 01202 606 232 *Prisoner of Love*, Feb 19 - £11. *Conversations with Rula Lancelotti*, Christopher Timothy and Graham Seed, Mar 11 - £12.50. *Melody with Val Lehman and Nigel Harrison*, Mar 18 - £11.

RICHMOND

Orange Tree Theatre* 0181-940 3853 *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* with Kate O'Mara, Jan 23, 24, 25 January - £9.50 full price tickets only. *The Good Women of Seizures*, Feb 6, 7, 8 - £9.50, £9.50 concs.

S

BOOKS

13

For the love of a good chinwag

Penny Perick listens intently to the chatty riches of a story of romance lost and found

■ WINDFALL
By Helen Stevenson
Sceptre, £16.99

THE ENTWINED themes of Helen Stevenson's second novel are love and landscape. Explorations of both weave through the plot, enriching the texture of the story which put simply — although Stevenson's sumptuous style is anything but that — is about a woman, Elizabeth, who loses her singing voice and then her lover.

This lover, a sculptor called Will, has caused Elizabeth to leave a married man, Mark, with whom she has been having a restrained, well-mannered affair for years. Will lays siege to Elizabeth's aloofness and then, a little short of nine months later, vanishes. Elizabeth is summoned to collect his ashes from a hopelessly incompetent

solicitor in a scene that displays Stevenson's macabre humour at its most glittering. The cartoon containing the ashes has "Will's name on it in black felt-tip (no delicacy spared) as though he were the addressee and not the very contents themselves".

Reluctant to dispose of this awkward bequest, Elizabeth travels to France to

stay with the recently widowed Marguerite and begin a convalescence of the spirit. Also making the journey to Marguerite's farmhouse are Christian, a pavement artist, Aidan, a schoolmaster whose career has had a shattering jolt, Alicia, one of his former pupils, and Mark, now divorced and hoping to reclaim Elizabeth.

These characters have interesting and original ideas on everything under the sun, from troubadour poetry to the reason why people travel in shell suits: they put a shell on their backs to compensate for the strangeness of being away from home. Still on clothes, which play a major part in the story, Elizabeth, musing on headscarves, "mentally congratulated the Queen for being quite possibly the first woman in history to have made an item of clothing go out of fashion by her association with it".

This must be one of the chattiest novels ever. There are no end of fascinating conversations as people collide, part, and, fatefully, regroup. It has an odd feverish quality; within a few pages it flicks from profound philosophy to light-fingered nonsense without losing its absorbing power.



Zency: historical thriller

Adams on the eve of the century

■ PANAMA
By Eric Zency
Sceptre, £9.99, paperback original

SOMETIMES fiction veers too close to history for its own good. The true story of the construction of the Panama Canal, begun by the Americans in 1881 and finished by the Americans in 1914, is so remarkable in its own right that any novel propped up against its bulk is in danger of looking a little thin. The French effort, overseen by le grand Français, Ferdinand de Lesseps — the builder of Suez — collapsed in the face of bad planning, the ravages of disease and mysterious fraud; it was not until 1904, under the charismatic aegis of Theodore Roosevelt, that the struggle to build a path between the seas would be resumed.

It is a brave novelist who inserts his own mystery into this existing stew, and a braver one still who takes as his detective Henry Adams, journalist, historian, the descendant of two presidents and redoubtable author of the nine-volume *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*. Eric Zency's *Panama* is set in 1892, in a Paris still rocked by the Canal scandal. Adams, not yet recovered from the suicide of his wife seven years earlier, is drawn to Miriam Tubbott, a free-spirited American art student: when another woman's body is fished out of the Seine and identified as hers, he sets out on a quest that will lead him to the heart of governmental corruption — on both sides of the Atlantic.

Panama inevitably invites comparison with *The Alienist*, another thriller set in the 19th century on the cusp of the development of forensic detection. And as Caleb Carr recreated *fin-de-siècle* New York, so Zency has brought Paris alive, right down to the "baked-fish scent" of iron made not by the new electric lights. More importantly he has given us a Henry Adams who is recognisably the author of *The Education of Henry Adams* and a fine fictional creation, one who, witless, "knew himself to be more portable in the world" and so game for some spare-time sleuthing.

Zency is himself an historian and a contributing editor of *North American Review* — which Adams once edited. In choosing not the whole broad scope of the Panama saga for his backdrop but an as yet obscure detail of its history, he has created a story that is both thriller and an examination of a changing world. In his first novel, Zency has proved himself well up to the task of sustaining our interest and suspending our disbelief.

ELIZABETH BUCHAN ERICA WAGNER

Sarah Johnson finds the life of a prewar adventurer and author fizzy, frivolous and great fun

Brittle young thing

DODIE SMITH will always be remembered as the author of *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, the story whose rereleased Disney version launched a million plastic breakfast bowls last year. But her heart, as a writer, always belonged in the prewar West End theatre — the secure, starchy, mink-clad world of bright and lively drawing-room comedies.

Dodie was the sort of girl people call "spirited", "kooky" or "feisty". She endured some years of penury as a failing bit-part actress before sensibly landing a job at Heal & Son, where she decided to "collect" her employer, Ambrose Heal, in one of the jolliest bits of adultery you have ever seen. He already had a beloved wife and an awesome mistress, but this did not bother Dodie.

She flirted wildly until one day Heal pinned a ticket marked *widow* (sold) on her dress. "How long is one supposed to hold goods for customers who don't take delivery?" Dodie challenged him. The subsequent relationship, and others of her youth, fed her writing for decades.

As Valerie Grove explains at the opening of this delicious champagne cocktail of a book, Dodie left millions of words about herself in the form of letters, journals and four autobiographies, a huge, witty record of a theatrical and literary life. Wonderful for a biographer — but what did Dodie Smith's life amount to?

■ DEAR DODIE: The Life of Dodie Smith
By Valerie Grove
Chatto & Windus, £20

True, she "struck gold three times, in three different genres, in three different decades" but the gold is of varied purity. Her best-known novel, *I Capture the Castle*, is a cult, but very much a minority one (now republished by Virago Modern Classics at £6.99) and nobody will be broken-hearted if her West End triumph, *Dear Octopus*, never sees the footlights again.

Dodie's sad fate is to embody features of the 1930s that deserve obscurity: the "brittle" frivolity, the anti-Semitism. She and her handsome husband, Alec Beesley, scurried for America as soon as war looked likely, ostensibly because Alec was a pacifist — but, even from Grove's sympathetic account, the word "selfishness" springs to mind. Dodie believed that she had "selflessly" left England for Alec's beliefs, yet the truth was that she could not survive for a day without him to arrange her meals, money and motored mutts while she wrote and read. Basking in the Californian sun, giggling and gossiping with Christopher Isherwood and John Van Druten (the author, thanks to Dodie's encouragement, of *I am a Camera*), Dodie "ached to share D-Day so that she could write a Britain-at-war play". I'm sure she did.

Spot of fame: Smith is best remembered for Disney's *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*

Grove does not probe the reasons for Dodie's childlessness. Instead she gives us the funny side: Dodie's devotion to animals, which extended to feeding rats like birds "until the lawn was alive with them". Returning to a postwar England where playwrights had to

politicise or die, she was baffled by writers such as Pinter: "One couldn't care less what happens next," she wrote of *The Birthday Party*. But when in 1959 Walt Disney came to lunch, she anti-Semite in Dodie was charmed: "Walt's nickname

was Mickey Rat, so she had expected a small, mean-looking Hollywood Jew; but he was tall, broad, Midwestern and good-looking." Grove reports all this gracefully, giving us the best of the irrepressible Dodie Smith without hiding the worst of her.

Sinister dealings in the dark alleys of a new democracy

The art of murder in Prague

■ THE PHOENIX OF PRAGUE
By Douglas Skeggs
Little, Brown, £15.99

PRAGUE, to Douglas Skeggs, is not the pretty, bustling area around Wenceslas Square but the grim backstreets, cramped apartments and crumbling buildings beyond the tourist havens. This is Prague as a symbol of the new European democracies, free of its former ideological shackles but not quite sure what to put in their place, a city in which shiny new democrats, old communists, fascists and unashamed opportunists struggle for a stake in the fledgling state.

Former Czech activist Jan Capek, now working for British intelligence, is sent back to his native city to find out who is feeding the English art market with high-class paint-

ings from the collection of the Romanian dictator, Ceausescu. Capek's first contact has been killed minutes before his arrival. The police take violent exception to his presence in Prague. He finds himself in thrall to a beautiful painter

with a murky past. His activities come to the attention of the sinister leader of a new political movement.

At the same time, his British masters are starting to behave strangely. Killings, beatings and frenetic chases occur with satisfying regularity. Ceausescu's works of art become the focus of something much more frightening.

The Phoenix of Prague has the feel of postwar Vienna, or Eric Ambler's Balkans between the wars. Skeggs has a feel for a place in political and social transition. He is also a good storyteller and he knows his paintings, too.

MARCEL BERLINS

Passion flowers

■ THE LOVE LETTER
By Cathleen Schine
Sceptre, £5.99

"IT'S PREPOSTEROUS for a middle-aged woman to fall in love with a boy unless you are that middle-aged woman and you have fallen in love with the boy." Thank goodness for that. The queasy feelings experienced by female forty-somethings on reading *The Love Letter* are mitigated by Cathleen Schine's honesty and by a final twist in the story that goes some way to neutralising the distrust of middle age lurking in the text. These shifts in perspective are characteristic of the novel's see-saw charm and pleasantly provocative content.

Divorced, attractive and running a bookshop in Pequot, a seaside town in New England, Helen acknowledges that life is good even with her daughter away and her former husband making so much money. The bookshop is thriving, partly because of her light, flirtatious touch with customers, partly because of her eclectic taste and stringent standards, partly to the local taste for military history.

She is not an easy boss, something which the two students working in their summer vacation discover. So too does the third: good-looking Johnny who sports an ear-ring and a mouth like Jeanne Moreau's. Then Helen discovers a letter left lying in the store. "How does one fall in love?" it asks the unknown "Gaur" to whom it is addressed, and triggers thereby the deconstruction of Helen's certainties.

Borrowing the idea from Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Love Letter* is a neatly plotted, thrifflily constructed meditation on the power of suggestion. As Helen discovers, if a love affair is founded on airy nothings, subsequent unleashed emotions can be anything but. The references are literary and structure precisely balanced.

but the tone is unalarming and the prose, which occasionally plunges into the arch, traces the hesitations, subterfuges and desperations of love with the thoroughness of the well acquainted.

Helen had spent her life being comfortable. Now she was not. Now "she understood passion and, helplessly to do otherwise, she clung to it" — and the author is very convincing on its unexpected and treacherous depths.

ELIZABETH BUCHAN

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NEW IN PAPERBACK



Jayne Anne Phillips: a powerful and intelligent tale

■ SHELTER

By Jayne Anne Phillips
Faber, £5.99

THIS INTENSE and absorbing novel is set in an American all-girls' camp in the summer of 1963. Removed from their dysfunctional homes, Lenny, Cap, Alma and Delia affect disdain for campfire singongs, vanishing into the forest to be alone with nature and each other. But the forest has other inhabitants — an almost feral young boy, his psychopathic step-father and a fanatically religious ex-con.

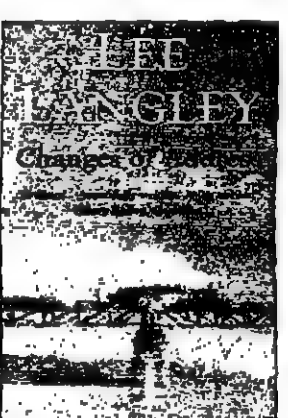
You begin by thinking this is a story about adolescent risk-taking and the corruption of innocence, but gradually enter a more complex universe, in which individuals confront real or perceived powers of darkness in a fight for survival. Setting the ordered world of the camp against the beauty and menace of nature and the free spirits of the children against the weird preoccupations of adults, Phillips builds her unsettling story, drawing the reader confidently and mercilessly into the deepest thoughts of her characters.

Her descriptive gifts reach their remarkable height when children, adults, nature and the elements converge in a grim battle that must remain forever secret from the outside world. This uncompromising book confirms Jayne Anne Phillips as an extraordinarily powerful writer who draws uncannily on all her senses, especially the sixth.

■ ECCENTRICS

By David Weeks and Jamie James
Phoenix, £6.99

SARAH WINCHESTER, wife of the American arms manufacturer Oliver Winchester, believed that the ghosts of those killed by her husband's rifles would haunt her unless she built a house big enough to hold them all. When she died in 1922, her home had 158 rooms, over 2,000 doors and more than 10,000 windows. She is just one of the eccentrics — Isaac Newton and William Blake among them — encountered in this hugely entertaining study, the first to look seriously at this "disorder". Does eccentricity distort life or enhance it? In the end, one cannot help but agree with the authors that "the condition of eccentric is freedom".



■ CHANGES OF ADDRESS

By Lee Langley
Minerva, £5.99

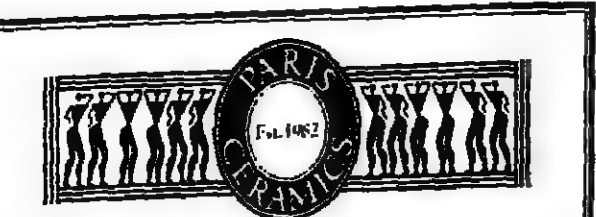
MAGGIE'S mother married her father because she was told that she should not, and soon got tired of him. She dragged her daughter round the fringes of polite society in 1940s India, bouncing from man to man and leaving behind her luggage whenever her allowance ran out. Thus Maggie acquired a precocious knowledge of the world, a beloved, short-lived baby brother, and a burning ambition to escape from her mother as soon as possible. This sad but fascinating book gives both a child's-eye view of the last days of the Raj, and a portrait of a very peculiar mother-daughter relationship.

■ OVID

By David Wishart
Sceptre, £5.99

THE POET Ovid has died in exile. His step-daughter Perilla wants his ashes brought back to Rome. To secure the necessary imperial approval, she turns to the dissolute Marcus Corvinus, grandson of Ovid's former patron. But Tibertus denies permission. Why? Like Chandler's Marlow, Corvinus wisecracks his way through a weary world of murder and intrigue until he hunts down the truth. A taut thriller in which ancient Rome springs to life.

Contributors: Nicki Household, Erica Wagner, Fiona Hook, Kaie Bassett, Ross Leckie



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NEW ON CD: Grasping and missing the Handel; Tippett's grief; ambient roots; Jean genius

CHAMBER

Hilary Finch

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Jarrett: strangely numb

A copy of a 1730 Jacob Denner alto recorder makes its stately ornamented progress through the Sonata No 11 in F. For the Fourth Sonata, in A minor, a copy of a 1700 Thomas Stanesby alto recorder is lit by the coppersmith of Koopman's harpsichord playing and the stride of Jaap Ter Linden's cello.

The little 1730 Stanesby voice flute in D duets with the cello's long-breathed lines in the Largo of the Sonata No 9 in D minor, before hiding and seeking its way irresistibly through the Presto's chase.

The meeting of the versatile classical and jazz pianist Keith Jarrett with Handel is a disap-

pointment. This most imaginative of performers seems strangely numb in the face of the composer whose keyboard suites he has apparently been studying for 20 years. And when it comes to an encounter with Handel as improvisatory composer, Jarrett is only demure and mild-mannered.

OPERA

John Higgins

SULLIVAN
The Yeomen of the Guard
Mellor/Palmer/Archer/
Suart/Maxwell/Welsh
National Opera Orchestra/
Mackerras
Trial by Jury
Evans/Banks/Suare/Welsh
National Opera Orchestra/
Mackerras
Telarc CD-80404 (2 CDs)**

TELARC'S Yeomen follows too closely on the excellent Philips version of Gilbert & Sullivan's tale of double dealings at the Tower for commercial comfort. But Yeomen is in the WNO repertoire, so Yeomen it was to be.

Spoken dialogue is reduced to a couple of shreds to allow Trial by Jury to be fitted into the second CD. Yeomen, whose plot has a few wrinkles, suffers from this approach. Act 1, with short number following hot on the heels of short number until the complex finale, is in danger of sounding perfunctory and too homespun.

Charles Mackerras really grips the piece in the second act when Richard Suart's Jack Point, wistful and self-deprecating, comes into his own. Felicity Palmer's Dame Carruthers keeps the rack turning in the Tower with a certain amount of vibrato. But Neill Archer's Fairfax sounds merely bland. Alwyn Mellor's soprano is too heavy for Elsie (a difficult role), and Pamela Helen Stephen makes an anonymous Phoebe.

The real bonus in this issue lies in the whizzing performance of Trial by Jury. The cast, led by Suart's jolly Judge, puts a leer on some of Gilbert's

NEW ON VIDEO: The summer before Stalin; nobbling Ty Cobb; Antonioni double bill



Happy family: a last, sweet season in Mikhalkov's Burnt by the Sun

BURNT BY THE SUN

Fox, 15, 1994

DIRECTOR Nikita Mikhalkov works hard engineering the Chekhovian atmosphere of a country house basking in a hot summer's day as Stalin begins his purges. Mikhalkov himself plays the Bolshevik hero enjoying the sweet life at his dacha. Both as actor and director he tends towards self-indulgence, and his daughter Nadia, a six-year-old witness to the drama, proves a mixed blessing. The sweeping camerawork is easy on the eye, but the film needs more darts of irony.

L'AVVENTURA

Connoisseur, PG, 1959

ANTONIONI'S brand of enigmatic cinema has long since fallen from fashion, but this archetypal example can still enthrall if you adjust to the film's rhythms and stop worrying over the water-thin plot about a woman's disappearance from a yacht. Monica Vitti leads the friends whose search for the missing woman prompts beautiful compositions and existential dread.

BYE BYE LOVE

Fox Guild, 12, 1995

HOLLYWOOD comedy conceived by, and for, male baby-boomers. Three recently divorced dads head the plot, and retro sounds fill the sound-

track, while the jokes deal with former wives, new girlfriends and weekend custody of the kids. A few funny scenes arrive when Randy Quaid embarks on a disastrous blind date, but the bulk is wearisome.

COBB

Warner, 18, 1994

BIOGRAPHICAL movies usually have sympathetic subjects. Not so this prickly treatment of American baseball legend Ty Cobb, portrayed as a monstrous egomaniac, violent and racist, struggling in old age to dictate rosy memoirs to a tormented journalist. Tommy Lee Jones's fiery performance is worth watching, and director Ron Shelton shows exceptional feeling for the lore and language of American sports. A rental release.

IL DESERTO ROSSO

Connoisseur, 15, 1964

WITH Red Desert, Antonioni added colour to his armoury, welding it with the same rigorous control that he used over composition and editing. Monica Vitti returns as his central character, a woman in Ravenna toying with an affair in the midst of a nervous breakdown. Antonioni conjures extraordinary images from the bleak industrial landscape.

GEOFF BROWN

nominal: from the frantic squalls of free jazz noise produced (acoustically) by the Peter Brotzmann Octet on their 1968 recording of *Machete Gun* and the distressed guitar overload of the Velvet Underground's *I Heard Her Call My Name* and *My Bloody Valentine Loomer* to the pastoral beauty of Claude Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune* played by the English Chamber Orchestra. Along the way we hear "field" recordings of Buddhist chants, howler monkeys, boat horns, train whistles, and birdsong.

The imaginative sequencing and skilful editing together of the tracks to produce a virtually seamless listening experience out of such wildly diverse material is certainly impressive. And as a vehicle for illustrating Toop's point — that there is a hidden world of music within the sounds that are occurring around us all the time, and that these sounds help to shape and determine our notions of what music actually is — it functions magnificently.

David Sinclair

BABYLON ZOO

Spaceman, EMI 8 82649**

FOLLOWING the pattern of songs by Stitskin, Shaggy, the Clash and others, *Spaceman* is the latest soundtrack from a Levis advertisement to head for instant chart glory. The debut single by British group Babylon Zoo, it has proved the perfect accompaniment for the "alien babe" commercial but also holds up in its own right.

A heavily synthesized rocker, with an oddly lurching, variegated intro, *Spaceman* is rich in futuristic imagery, with echoes of David Bowie and Gary Numan that extend well beyond its title. "Mordid fascinations, television takes control... Electronic information tapers with your soul," sings Jas Mann, the group's 24-year-old songwriter and leader. With its bright, icy appeal and a moody undercurrent, it sounds as if it should wear well. Like the jeans.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

most suggestive couplets. Barry Banks and Rebecca Evans as the litigants would grace any breach-of-promise court. Don't dilly-dally at the Tower, drop into the Old Bailey.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

TIPPETT
The Heart's Assurance
Concerto for Double String Orchestra; Divertimento on "Selling the Round"; Little Music for String Orchestra
Sinfonia/City of London Sinfonia/Hickox
Chandos CHAN 9409**

THE LATEST disc in Richard Hickox's Tippett series for Chandos, this time with the City of London Sinfonia, attractively balances the known and the less known, including a premiere recording.

The latter is of Tippett's superb song cycle *The Heart's Assurance*, not in the usual

version for tenor and piano, but in the orchestration made by Meirion Bowen. *The Heart's Assurance* was Tippett's response to the suicide of a close friend, Francesca Alincoln. The composer's grief and bitterness were so profound that he could bring himself to make these settings of poems by Sidney Keyes and Alun Lewis only five years later, and those emotions are projected more powerfully than ever in Bowen's skilful orchestration. John Mark Ainsley is the excellent tenor soloist.

In the Concerto for Double String Orchestra, Hickox draws lively, responsive playing from the Sinfonia. *The Divertimento* on "Selling the Round" is derived from a multi-composer commission for the 1953 Aldeburgh Festival. Tippett subsequently expanded his contribution, and this piece and the *Little Music for String Orchestra* are given alert, stylish performances.

JAZZ
Clive Davis

KATHLEEN BATTLE

So Many Stars

Sony Classical SK 6843**
BILLIE HOLIDAY she is not, but on this soothing collection of spirituals, ballads and lullabies Kathleen Battle sensibly makes no pretensions to being a jazz diva. Aware that La Scala and Birdland do not easily mix, she remains true to her classical background, and relies on her select group of musicians — led by the pianist Cyrus Chestnut — to take care of the swing.

The one occasion where her phrasing seems excessively formal is, in fact, the title tune, where Alan and Marilyn Bergman's lyrics call for a certain degree of intimacy and relaxation. The rest works surprisingly well on its own terms. Chestnut is just the right man for *Steal Away* and

the Creole lullaby *Fais Do Do*, while Grover Washington's lightweight soprano saxophone, usually out of its depth in a straight jazz context, forms a genial foil to Battle.

Romero Lubambo's acoustic



Battle: no pretensions

guitar brings a Latin hue to the lilting interpretation of Villa-Lobos's *Melodia Sentimental*. Overall, jazz lovers may find it frustrating to hear a high-class group being so careful to play within its

limits, yet this is one of those occasions where quiet and introspection offer their own rewards.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ocean of Sound

Virgin AMBT 10 (2 CDs)**

ASSEMBLED by author and musician David Toop, *Ocean of Sound* is an intriguing and free-ranging exploration of so-called "ambient" music. Designed as a companion to Toop's book, *Ocean of Sound* — *Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds* (published by Serpent's Tail), it is a compilation of tracks that all shed light in one way or another on the often overlooked relationship between the sound of music and the sounds of the environment from whence it came. The album's range is phe-

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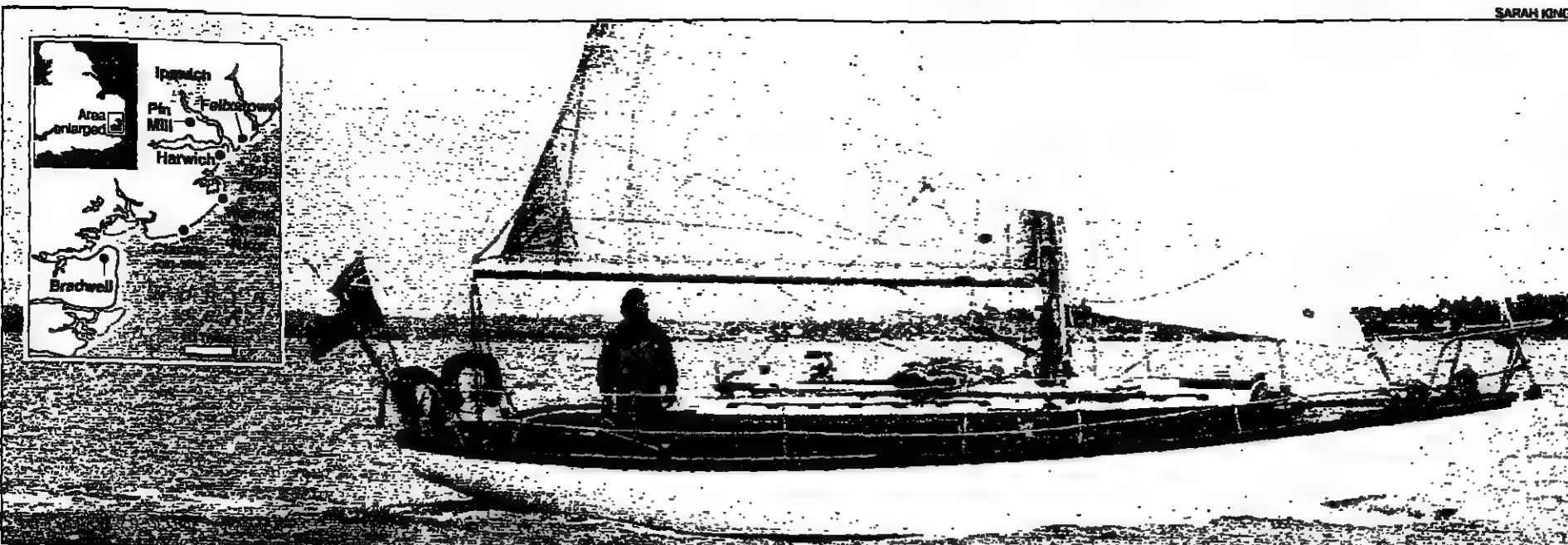
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OUTDOORS

15

SAILING: Undaunted by the conditions, Edward Gorman makes an East Coast odyssey

Edward Gorman, sailing correspondent of *The Times*, at the helm of *Nutcracker* on the Blackwater. The sea was flat calm on his outward voyage, a heavy swell on the return

Fog in January in the Walley, off Clacton in Essex. A flat calm. Not a breath of wind to stir the surface. *Nutcracker*, my 35-foot cutter, driven by her engine, plugging on into the gloom.

This was the second time I had invited a friend, Dan, to share the dubious pleasures of a "winter cruise". He was beginning to wonder whether we would ever hoist a sail or see anything. Once again we were out in a windless pea soup, and far from enjoying the delights of the East Coast — views of Clacton pier, Frinton-on-Sea, Walton-on-the-Naze and Harwich harbour — our field of vision was restricted to a couple of hundred yards either side of the boat.

As we nervously slid out of the Blackwater Estuary, looking for the Bench Head buoy, our eyes fixed on the compass which alone could guide us from one waypoint to another, a seal dipped lazily below the surface alongside us. After that we saw almost nothing — except the rubbish which an agitated sea normally conceals.

There were bits of plastic everywhere, what looked like part of a staircase floating out

Chilled in a pea soup

towards Holland, tiny oil slicks. A condom drifted past. Dan put a brave face on it all. "It's like the title sequence to *Arena*," he said as I went below for the Jack Daniel's. "That bottle floating in the Atlantic. Except we are miles from the open ocean."

Then there was the cold. The forecast had spoken of a south to south-easterly which, had it materialised, would have been far preferable to a dreaded northerly, and a maximum air temperature of seven degrees.

After several hours in the cockpit, we were beginning to feel the chill, starting in our boots and working its way up. The Jack Daniel's proved a worthy foil as we pressed on past the occasional lobster pot, through a flat, cold sea which would have killed us in less than half an hour, had either of us fallen in. Although I have a Decca navigation system on board, its workings remain a mystery to me and it has not even been plugged in since the boat was revived last year. Sailing with the tide dead astern, we simply followed the

compass courses between buoys, using the Medusa buoy off the Naze Ledge as our point to turn into Harwich.

Our itinerary was the staple diet of East Coast sailors — a trip from Bradwell Marina on the Blackwater Estuary in Essex, along the coast through the Walley, into Harwich harbour past Felixstowe docks, then up the Orwell river to the hamlet of Pin Mill in Suffolk, where the idea was to pick up a mooring and go ashore for dinner.

The journey, of some 35 miles each way, is ideal for a two-day outing and can offer challenging sailing at sea followed by the tranquil rural elegance of the Orwell.

Pin Mill, an old shipbuilding and smuggling village where ships were damaged during the last war to protect them from mines, is among the most inviting destinations for the east coast sailor. In his guide *Tideways and Byways in Essex and Suffolk*, Archie White put it like this: "It has been said that at sometime in their lives all

Mohammedans go to Mecca: it might be said with equal truth that, sooner or later, all yachtsmen drop their hooks at Pin Mill."

It could have something to do with the Butt & Oyster pub, which is one of the finest in England. Dan, who was new to it, described it as "a proper mad old place that's hard to get to, serving wonderful ale".

In the summer Pin Mill is swamped with people, including yachtsmen from as far afield as Holland, France, Belgium and the English south coast. In the Butt it's ten deep in the bar. Yet Dan and I had it all to ourselves. We reached our mooring in the dark after passing through Felixstowe, with its huge cranes and container ships.

Nutcracker, safely on her mooring, bobbed on the tide as we lit the oil lamps and the cabin heater, and waited for enough water to row ashore. After three pints of bitter by the open fire, and a hearty meal, we talked about our

hopes for a cracking sail back the next day.

"It was frustrating but interesting — I quite liked it," said Dan philosophically. "I feel as if I am part of a novel — sailing through the fog not knowing where you're going. But what I want now is to get some real sailing."

During a fitful sleep on board, we realised this was exactly what we would get. *Nutcracker* was bouncing around in increasingly choppy waters. Halyards on the mast clinked and cracked all night as the wind grew in strength, blowing the fog away. The early morning forecast spoke of a south-easterly force five increasing to six or seven — ideal for driving the boat at speed against the tide.

As we set off with a reef in the mainsail and the jib partly rolled, Dan saw the Orwell estuary for the first time when the mist gradually lifted and we headed down the river and out into Harwich harbour.

In the approaches, a big swell was building and *Nutcracker* crashed and slid off

the waves, steaming along at about seven knots through a gusting wind. We were getting regularly soaked, but it was thrilling stuff.

For Dan this was the business. After going below to try to make two cups of coffee, almost scalding himself and throwing it all around the cabin floor, he emerged through the hatch. "We're rounding Cape Horn now, aren't we?" he asked.

All the frustrations of the day before fell away as *Nutcracker* charged back past Walton, then Frinton, then Clacton. We had a clear view of them and didn't even bother to look at the compass.

As we turned in towards the Blackwater, we had the wind on our beam and the sun came out to welcome us. *Nutcracker* settled on to a gentle reach and we whizzed up against the tide under full sail past North Eagle buoy, the Colne Bar and the Bench Head — until Bradwell nuclear power station came into view.

People have joked that, in the fog, you can find your way into Bradwell marina using a Geiger counter. Luckily we didn't need one as we made our way up the narrow channel in the dark and back into our berth.

Feather report

Secrets of the pecking order

BIRDS soon recover from the cold weather and, if it stays mild, their life can be quite agreeable as the days start to grow longer. There is food enough for the present, and increasing time to feed.

Green woodpeckers provide a good example. They like to eat ants best, and the most common view of them is as they fly up from a stretch of grass, and loop away like a blob of golden light into the trees.

They are very good at finding and catching ants. Large anthills provide easy prey, but they also search for ants under the turf. They dig exploratory holes in a lawn with their long beaks, and when they find ants, they lick them up with their long, sticky tongues. They will take the eggs, the grubs and the insects.

If the ants run up their legs and on to their feathers, they shake them off by kicking their feet in the air. Even in snowy weather, they are good at delving beneath the snow and finding ants, though they may suffer when the ground is frozen solid.

They do not really peck wood very much. In the summer, they still collect ants from the leaves and branches of trees. They do sometimes extract beetles from rotten timber, but they peck at tree trunks mainly to excavate the holes in which they nest and roost. There is a record of one making holes in a beehive in cold weather, apparently attracted by the humming inside — but it did not actually eat the bees.

In the winter they live solitary lives, eating and roosting alone. Sometimes they have a little

dom, clinging to the tree trunk, before they go into their roosting hole for the night.

But next month they will pair up again. In many cases, the same two birds will come together as last year, because they do not stray far from home. The burst of sharp, laughing cries that they make as they fly off will modulate into a longer, plummier laugh, which is the equivalent of their song — and we shall have another sign that spring is on the way.

Incidentally, the flocks of waxwings that have been coming into Britain from Scandinavia in the past couple of weeks are also going to find life easy for a while. They feed on berries, and there are still plenty of those on the bushes. They particularly like cotoneasters — and that is where to look out for them.

DERWENT MAY

What's about: Birders — watch out for courtship displays by great crested grebes and other waterfowl. Twitters — for details of sightings call Birdline. (0891 700222). Calls cost 40p a minute cheap rate. 50p a minute at all other times.



Green woodpeckers: ant seekers

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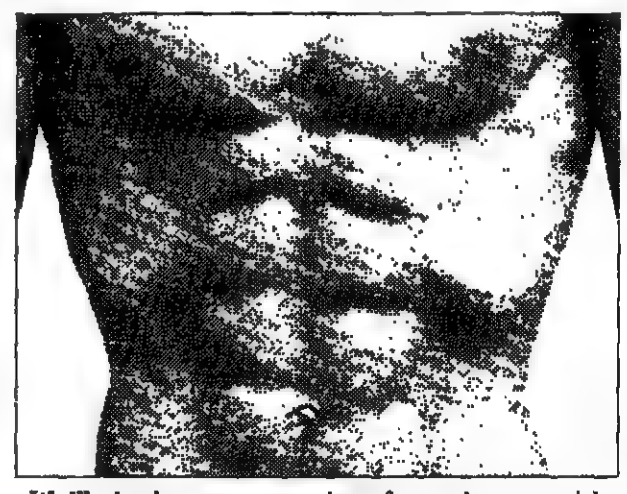
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Can you spare just 7 minutes a day to have a flat, firm, sexy stomach?

If the answer is yes, I have wonderful news about my new Video that can give you the kind of flat stomach that will be the envy of everyone.

My name is Jill Knipp. I am a Certified Personal Trainer and I have developed a new Stomach Flattening Video containing 7 simple stomach exercises that take 7 minutes to complete. Yes, just 7 minutes — about the time it takes to make breakfast or take a shower.

I promise you that if you devote just 7 minutes a day to these simple exercises you can have a flat, firm, attractive midsection faster than you ever dreamed possible.



Why this belly-flattening video works in just 7 minutes a day

The abdominal exercises in my Video work ONLY your abdominal muscles. They do not work your back, neck or other parts of your body. The 7 simple exercises in my Video automatically target your abdominal muscles — and only your abdominal muscles.

My Video guarantees you a perfect abdominal workout every time — all in just 7 minutes. And these exercises are safe, effective, fun — and they work. The 7 stomach exercises in my Video will smooth out, firm and flatten the muscles in your midsection. But not all abdominal exercises do this.

Some abdominal exercises can actually build your abdominal muscles — this is why many people who start stomach-reducing programmes often DO NOT get rid of their gut despite doing hours of grueling exercises.

I can assure you this WILL NOT happen by doing any of the exercises in my 7 minute abdominal workout Video. With my Video you will quickly notice that your clothes fit better and your friends and family will likely comment on how good you look.

It's like having your own personal trainer come to your home

With my new Video, it's like having your own personal trainer come to your home everyday. You simply slide my Video into your VCR and I will show you exactly how to do the 7 abdominal exercises. I will personally guide you through the programme. You can see for yourself how to do each exercise — so you will be sure that you are doing them properly and getting the maximum stomach-slimming benefits. These abdominal exercises are so effective in getting rid of a pot belly and slimming your midsection that doing more than the 7 minutes of exercises would probably be a waste of time. The 7 simple exercises in the Video are all you need to have the firm, tight, sexy stomach that everyone wants but few are able to achieve. If you were to hire your own personal trainer it would cost you hundreds if not thousands of pounds — and the results would not equal the results you can expect to achieve with my Video. That's because not all trainers know about the incredible results that can be obtained from my simple 7 minute abdominal workout. And my abdominal exercise Video has many other advantages. For example, you will

know for sure that you are doing each exercise properly. And you will know for sure that you are devoting the proper time to each exercise. And most important I will be right there guiding and encouraging you all the way. I promise I will flatten your pot belly and slim your midsection so quickly and easily that you won't believe your eyes. A firm, flat stomach makes you look and feel better. Your posture often improves and nagging back problems often disappear.

Free Bonus

My Video is only £19.95 (plus £3 postage and handling) and it's worth every penny and more. But there's more! As a FREE

BONUS 1 will include my 7 Minute Butttock Shaping video programme. This programme is designed to give you buttocks that shapely, firm-as-steel look. Shapely buttocks can be the sexiest part of a person's body. But there's even more! I will also include my 7 Minute Leg-Shaping video programme. This programme shows you simple exercises that will trim, tone and form your legs — both your thighs and calves. This whole package normally sells for £39.95. But if you order now you get all three programmes on one convenient video for my one low price.

My video must work — or you pay nothing

I am so sure that you will be pleased with my Video, I have absolutely no reservations about offering you a no-questions-asked money-back guarantee good for a full 60 days after you receive the Video. If you are not 100 percent happy with the Video simply return it for a refund. Please place your order now. To order, simply fill out the coupon below and return it to my publishers, Carrell plc. Your Video will be rushed to you. Remember you get the 7 Minute Stomach-Flattening programme plus the Butttocks and Leg Shaping programmes as a free bonus. Order today — now, while you are thinking about it.

To: Jill Knipp, Carrell plc, Dept SFV8, Alresford, nr Colchester, Essex CO78AP or telephone our 24 hour order line on 01206 825600 (quoting reference no. SFV8).

Please rush me the 7-minute stomach-flattening video — price £19.95 plus £3 postage and handling. Don't forget to include FREE the Butttocks Shaping programme and Leg-Shaping programme. I understand that I must be completely satisfied or I can return the Video at any time within 60 days for a full refund.

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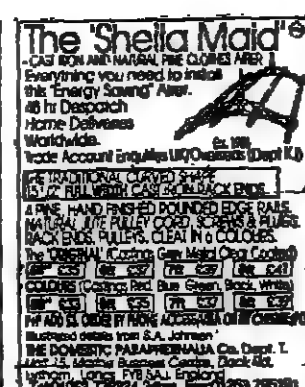
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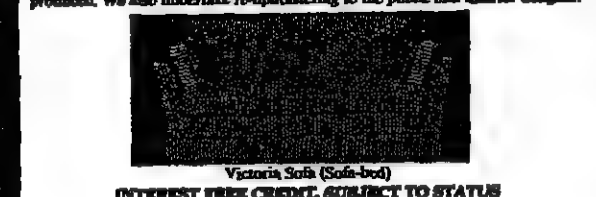
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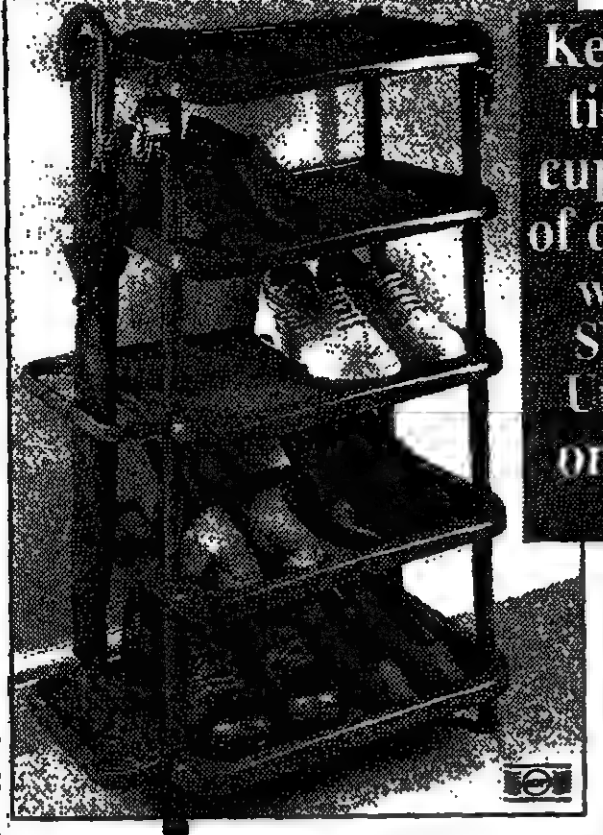
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SHOPPING

17

Well-cut suits are back in vogue. But a dressing down at a Jermyn Street tailor leaves Joseph Connolly with a rather frayed ego

DENZIL MCNEELANCE



Made to measure: John Lester says if the cutting is right, a suit should need only one fitting. Right: Andrew Yianni pieces it all together

My clothes encounter of the bespoke kind

Imagine you are standing in the darkish, wood-panelled and multi-mirrored interior of one of London's finest tailors — in my case, John Lester of Jermyn Street — and that said tailor is whipping around you with a measuring tape faster than the speed of light. He's calling out numbers to his note-taking assistant that presumably have some connection with parts of you that you never knew existed, and muttering a few abbreviations as well.

These are used not only for the sake of brevity but — more to the point — diplomacy. "DS," grunts the tailor — and

he is reluctant to let you in on the meaning, but eventually confides that it is nothing more sinister than "dropped shoulder". Others are rather more telling. "HS" stands for "high shoulders", but actually means "no neck". "VFT" stands for "very forward tummy", ie, pot belly; and "VRB" is a "very round back" — for which read Quasimodo. Then there's "HW" and "VPB". "The first means 'hollow waist'," says John Lester, "and the latter 'very pronounced bottom', but they both come down to a huge backside that somehow has to be concealed."

And here we have one of the

keys to the bespoke suit — that which does not need to be concealed must be accentuated: waistslines raised and trimmed, shoulders evened up and strengthened, legs slimmed and elongated — it's PR for the body. It is also a pampering and addictive experience. Some men go to bespoke tailors because they are fed up tramping around shops trying on standard clothes that never fit, others because they see it as a rite of passage or a reward. But I suspect that most go because, despite the various visits for fittings (though these days many tailors will come to you) and the cost (from £900 to about £2,000), it is the least troublesome way of acquiring comfortable clothes that last for decades. Few ever again return to off-the-peg.

At the top end of the market is, of course, Savile Row, and John Lester is a true Savile Row man of the old school. Now 60, he is a fourth-generation tailor (his grandfather had three shops in the East End in the mid-19th century, who spent six years in his father's workshop making cuffs, flaps and pockets before he was deemed ready to cut and tailor a "coat" (jacket, in our language). He then rose through Simpson's and Moss Bros before landing his first Savile Row job as a senior cutter with Lew Rose, and finally Henry Poole. He set up business in Cork Street and came to Jermyn Street in 1983.

"A good tailor will try to size up the customer while he is chatting: noting the way he stands, how much he crams into his pockets, physical irregularities. It helps to know his job, his lifestyle — then, when we choose cloth, we have a better idea about weight, texture, colour, feel. The measuring is important, but the cutting is the key. If the cutting is right, then even by the first fitting the suit fits," says Mr Lester.

Every tailor needs a first class coat-maker, and in Mr Lester's case it is 59-year-old Andrew Yianni: he moulds, assesses and immaculately sews (builds isn't too strong a word) around a stiff hessian cushion: everything happens in a three-dimensional form so that it is only when the body is inside a suit that the architecture of the whole becomes evident.

For the first fitting — maybe three or four weeks after



Preparatory stages: Andrew Yianni

choosing one's cloth — the coat looks like nothing on earth, but as soon as it hits the shoulders there is no doubt about the fit. Wool and hair canvas has been sewn into the lapels so they keep their shape even when wet, and lapels — a horsehair and fibre interlining — is stitched across the chest area and gives the drop of the coat a springiness that will not crease: cotton pockets are strengthened with heavy

Irish linen: shoulderpads are made from felt, and the whole is held together by a bewildering network of basting cotton.

After the fitting, the entire garment is taken to pieces, recut and adjusted, reserved, finished and lined. Similar attention is paid to trousers and waistcoat, and then all buttonholes (including four on either sleeve) are hand-sewn in silk — as is the loop behind one lapel, to hold a flower.

The result is as perfect as an imperfect body should expect. "Savile Row is the best," agrees Peter Hutchinson — another fourth-generation tailor from Yorkshire — "and that is the quality we aspire to." Mr Hutchinson, who employs eight tailors, is happy to call on people, and, although his prices are lower than those in London (around £450 to £500 plus VAT), his tailoring techniques are traditional. Both Mr Lester and Mr Hutchinson have grown-up sons, but neither has taken on the mantle of fifth generation. Ten years ago, the future of fine tailoring looked grim but, with the rediscovery of the well-cut suit that actually fits and the rise of a younger breed of tailors (Richard James, Mark Powell, Timothy Everest and Oswald Boateng), the future of one of Britain's proudest traditions looks set to do that most 1990s thing and re-invent itself.



Fitting end: John Lester checks Joseph Connolly's suit for size. It is then dismantled and adjusted to produce the end result (above)

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● Henry Poole, 15 Savile Row, London W1X 1AE (0171-734 5989). The oldest tailor in Savile Row.
● Kilgour, French & Stanbury, 8 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF (0171-734 6909).
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How to make it a sellers' market

Pricing your house shrewdly is the best policy, writes Rachel Kelly

Nowhere are there more price drops and bargains on offer than in January's property market.

The current housing market may be the worst on record, judging by two statistics. House sales for 1995 will probably total 1.2 million (final figures are not yet available from the Central Statistical Office) — the second lowest since current records began in 1977. And prices fell overall by 1.4 per cent, according to the Halifax Building Society. Such figures mask far larger percentage price drops for some houses, especially at the top end of the market, say two leading agents, Savills and Knight Frank.

Dropping the asking price is often less effective than most sellers might imagine in wooing buyers, according to Simon Agace, from Winkworth, London's biggest agent. "We notice a definite bias from buyers for property new on the market. Property that has been on sale for a few months or more is seen as tainted."

Alison Dean, from Savills, agrees. "Cutting the price of a house is not something we necessarily encourage. In the sales someone might see a cashmere coat and think, 'It's been reduced, I have to have it', but that doesn't happen with houses. A price cut would have to be dramatic to affect its selling ability, she says."

It is far better to put your house on the market at the right price in the first place. A survey by Black Horse Agencies confirms the estate agent's adage that the first offer made is often the best. The survey studied 1,500 transactions at 100 branches, and found that a house which sells within days of coming onto the market will usually get more than 95 per cent of its asking price. After 30 weeks, this falls to 90 per cent and after a year to 86 per cent.

Jan Davies, Black Horse's regional operations director, says: "In this market, only a sensibly priced house will get close to its asking price and sell fast."

So how do you correctly

PRICE CUTS

HUNTSBOURNE is a five-bedroom country house, near Sevenoaks, Kent, with swimming pool and paddock. Savills was selling it for £595,000 but has reduced it to £520,000. Alison Dean says: "Changes to the seller's circumstances have made him keener to move."

COCKFIELD Hall in Suffolk is a Grade I listed Tudor House, the price of which has been cut by Savills in Ipswich from £950,000 to £890,000. Ms Dean says: "The house was difficult to price because of its rarity."

FOXTONS is selling a four-bedroom flat in Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea (below). The flat was with another agent for £625,000 — now it is £495,000. Peter Rollings, of Foxtons, says: "The previous price was too high."



Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk: cut by £130,000 to £495,000

price a house, and who is to blame when things go wrong — you or your agent? Ms Dean says: "Look at your house from a stranger's viewpoint and be as dispassionate as possible. Perhaps get a family member to give their honest opinion. Because people love their homes it is easy to overlook the flaws. You have to be realistic."

The next step is to find comparables. Scour the local papers and your estate agent's window. Try to keep a log-

book of sales of similar property over the six months before you sell. Were their houses in better condition than yours? Was their kitchen more modern? Did they have a better designed roof extension? Such details can make a difference of thousands of pounds.

Peter Rollings is manager of Foxtons' office in South Kensington, London. He says: "Always get two or three agents in to view your house, and ask for their evidence of why they have chosen a partic-

ular price. Avoid the agent who vastly overprices the house in comparison with the others; if he's just doing it to get your business he won't be able to shift the property and will lose interest quickly."

If the agent proves apathetic or negative, sack him. Mr Rollings says: "It's only natural that an agent will get bored showing the same property day in, day out, without any sale, and loss of enthusiasm will only hinder matters further. It's an agent's job to be ambitious and enthusiastic."

If the house hasn't sold within two or three months, then something is wrong, Mr Rollings says. "The only variable you've got is the price. You'll need to make a cut of at least five per cent to make any difference."

He does emphasise, however, the need for balance. "Ultimately the agent must be ambitious for his client. Really, often there is not a very large gap between too much and not enough."

Patrick Ramsay is in charge of country houses at Knight Frank. He says: "Discuss the question of price openly with your agent. Sellers often think

that their property is worth more than it actually is."

Philip Blanchard, of John D. Wood & Co's Winchester office, agrees that price drops are often because the owner has sought too optimistic a price in the first place.

Sales are lost because sellers refuse to accept the price suggested by the agent, Mr Ramsay says. "Try and work as a team. The closest teams are the winning teams." He believes presentation of the house is important. "First impressions are essential —

buyers buy houses in the first ten minutes of viewing."

The rules are familiar, but it amazes agents how few sellers adhere to them. Mr Ramsay recommends: "A neat, well-organised exterior, and a tidy, warm and friendly interior. If you have a log fire, use it. Switching on lights makes sense at this time of year. Create an atmosphere that will appeal. Make sure children's bedrooms are relatively tidy. Don't overcrowd rooms with furniture, it shrinks the room. Redecorate blips if they spoil

the overall look. Don't, however, redecorate an entire room so that it outshines the rest of the house."

Make sure your house gets top quality presentation in brochures — a good picture with simple wording is best. Make sure the information is accurate, or it may lead to disputes at a later date. All these points, obvious though they may be, can make a difference to the sale. Mr Ramsay emphasises

the need to select the right agent. "Choose an agent who is going to bring the best coverage for your house, not just the one who's closest to your doorstep."

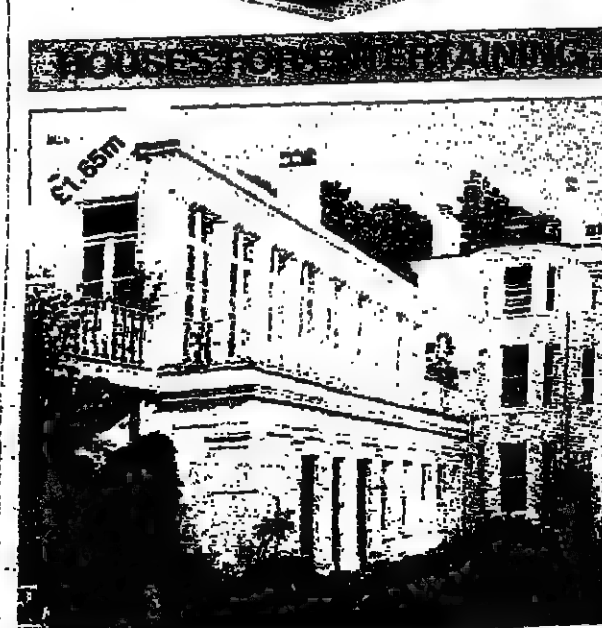
Ultimately, if you have been dispassionate, chosen your agent with care, and agreed a sensible price for your house, it should sell without a need for a price cut. Remember, sales figures may be the lowest for years, but more than a million people did manage to sell their house in 1995. This year, it could be you.



Heath Court in Essex is a 17th-century country house which has had its price reduced from £700,000 to £590,000. Mark Oliver, at the Ipswich office of Savills, says: "The seller had a very high expectation of the price to be achieved — which wasn't quite in line with the advice Savills gave; now, with the property under the £600,000 threshold, it is attracting interest."



FOR SALE



LONDON
Hillside House, Croom's Hill, Greenwich SE10. Grade II listed Georgian house with terraces in two thirds of an acre of gardens, bordering Greenwich Park. Six bedrooms, six bathrooms, four reception rooms, kitchen, office, utility area and cellar. Galleried drawing room/ballroom (44ft 7in x 17ft 9in), with full-length windows and polished wood floor. About £1.65m (Stutt & Parker, 0171-235 9859).



GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Siddington House, Cirencester. Immaculate Cotswold country house in 18 acres of garden and paddocks. Eight bedrooms, five bathrooms, three reception rooms, kitchen and staff flat. Converted barn/veterinary suite with vaulted ceilings, bar, kitchen and cloakroom. Heated swimming pool, two tennis courts, helicopter landing pad and hangar. About £1.15m (Knight Frank, 01285 659771).



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
Pednor House, Little Pednor, Chesham. Grade II listed house in five acres of gardens, orchards and paddocks. In the Chiltern Hills. Six bedrooms (all with en-suite baths), three reception rooms, terrace room, breakfast room, kitchen, utility room, playroom and study. Banqueting hall (60ft x 34ft), with oak flooring, vaulted ceiling and minstrel's gallery. Three-bedroom cottage, garaging and swimming pool. About £375,000 (Hamptons, 01494 778501).

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National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place Tel 0171 306 0055
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"William Morris Revisited: Questioning the Legacy" at the Whitworth Art Gallery
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THE TIMES

Designer water courses are *the* way this year to add charm to any type of garden. Stephen Anderton goes with the flow

Splash out with a licence to rill

The year of the rill is upon us. I say this not as a result of EU policy or the Chinese calendar, but as a general observation. At the moment, garden designers are having a field day with rills, those little water courses whose charm and fascination far exceed their surface area.

I can see why. Designer rills, whether sinuous and informal or rectilinear stone constructions, are a delightful method of pointing the way from A to B. You cannot help but go with the flow. They remind me of the rows of lights in the floor of aircraft gangways which point the way to the emergency exit.

Rills are a good way of making a significant water feature without the need for large volumes of water. If given a waterproof lining, they can be operated by a circulating pump in the same manner as a cascade in a rock garden, although the canalisation of a small stream is rather wonderful if you happen to have one.

The place to see the rill of rills is at Hestercombe House in Somerset. There is a pair of rills, each running down the centre of a long, raised grass terrace, which was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in the early years of the century. A generous strip of stone paving runs down either side of a water course, perhaps a foot across. Every now and then the paving gathers enough momentum to make a stone eddy, and it spirals off alongside to form a tiny pool.

The beauty of a formal water course like this is that the construction can be carefully detailed. Lutyens supported his edging

stones on pillars of stacked slate so that they overhang the water, which might then appear in flow under the grass as well as in the channel. The floor of the rill is made of slate on edge, laid across the direction of the rill, contrasting with the flow of the water.

Lutyens's rill contains only a few inches of water, so you can see the texturing of the surface below. But the surface of the water is well below the paved edges and in shade. In another situation, you could make the water surface more open and level with the surrounding area.

By making the water more prominent, a great deal can be done to make its passage interesting as it runs down a rill. (It can be shallowly or steeply stepped from time to time, or narrowed and broadened to create turbulence. The bed can be coarsely textured, with anything from coloured pebbles to glass, to roughen the surface of the water and alter the tune of its flow. The sound of the rill should be part of the design, sweet as the first glass of Beerenausele.

Designer rills are nothing new. At William Kent's 18th-century landscape garden at Rousham in Oxfordshire there is a fine example of an informal rill, which snakes along through Elysian woods and glades like a watery yellow brick road. Again, it is in a space large enough to be allowed to take a central course though the picture. In a smaller garden a careful choice must be made between what looks attractive and what is likely to break ankles. Where parties regularly overflow into town gardens, a rill across a lawn would achieve the



One of the finest rills around, in the sunken garden at Hestercombe House, Somerset, was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Unusually, this rill is planted.

same effect as an ankle-height razor wire. But, where there is enough room, why shouldn't the rill take centre stage? Think of Christopher Lloyd's one-brick-wide path which winds across the orchard at Great Dixter, a waterless rill if ever there was one. No doubt legions of planners from Brussels are already marching on Dixter and Rousham, ready to demand notices saying "DANGER—RILL" or "DANGER—PATH". One hopes that the

owners will give the planners ample opportunity to prove the risk personally.

Rills should be fun, a discreet and relaxed contrivance: a rill to follow the sweeping edge of a curved lawn perhaps; a rill trickling like an aqueduct along the top of a wall; or one which bifurcates to pass a natural boulder and passes on again as one.

Holker Hall in Cumbria uses steep, sloping rills to flank several

flights of garden steps, the water disappearing in a spiral with a noisy chorle, before passing under the landings and reappearing at a lower level. Perhaps you might make a spiral rill instead of a circular pond. Or a rill maze, perhaps, where the water can flow only through the one viable channel.

Unless you want to grow water plants, in a small garden a rill makes for more interesting use of

water than a pond. The combination of a formal pool with rills leading to or from it can provide the best of both worlds. Rills manage to be at home in both formal and informal gardens by simply highlighting some element of the design, but using water instead of plants. Not surprisingly, you rarely see a rill which is planted: the beauty of them is in their simplicity, with the elegant exception of Hestercombe rill.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Bring indoors frame pots of hyacinths and narcissi when the buds are just showing and put them in a cool room (50°F/10°C).
- Beware of walking on lawns hard with frost. Discoloured footprints will take some time to disappear.
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GARDENING

21

Facing the wrong way and neglected for six years, one newly restored garden is open to the public

Nature constrained, not subdued

A few yards from Ruskin's View in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria, one of the steepest gardens in England has been restored. This year the garden will be open to the public for the first time in its own right.

Set in Lakeland scenery, admired by Wordsworth, Turner and Ruskin, Church Brow Cottage commands breathtaking views. Its east-facing garden slopes precipitously down to the river Lune. The relationship between the garden and the surrounding landscape of water, pasture and fells has been dramatically enhanced by a restoration scheme started in 1992. Appropriately, the philosophy and method of restoration has been achieved according to Ruskin's principle: "Nature constrained but not subdued."

The Vivat Trust, an historic buildings preservation charity, acquired the leasehold of Church Brow Cottage in 1992. The 1830s Gothic-style summerhouse at the centre of the site was restored for holiday lets in 1993. The garden, which had been neglected for six years, had run wild. The trees and shrubs had grown riotously. The original zig-zag pathways, essential on a slope of such severity, were impenetrable, and weeds were rampant.

Wendy Anderson, a local gardener, was the inspired choice to undertake the restoration. Coming from a family of Lake District gardeners, working with nature is instinctive. "This garden faces the wrong way, suffers from raging winds, there's no sunshine after 2pm, it has bad access, and you are up against the weeds." Within this challenging setting, she has applied entirely organic methods.

The Vivat Trust also enlisted the help of Dr Rodney Gal-

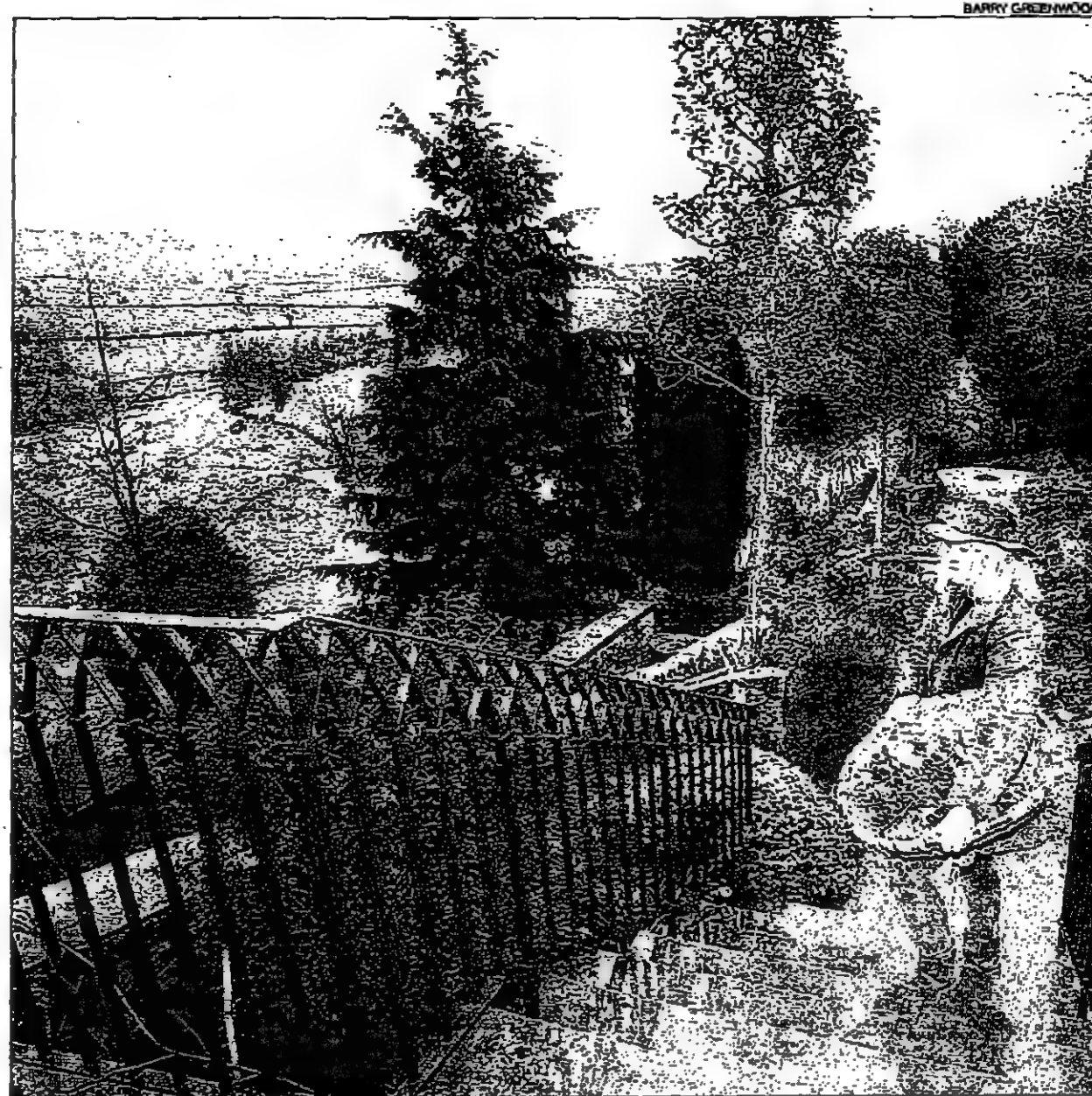
lagher, a garden historian and local GP, to produce a new plan. His design distinguished between a formal Italianate upper terrace on a level with the summerhouse, and a transition, through a series of steep paths, to more natural growth at river level to lead the eye easily into the Lakeland landscape beyond.

Ms Anderson shared the desire to keep the atmosphere of a natural sanctuary, birds and insects included, in the bottom half of the garden. Dr Gallagher's extensive list for replanting, including the importation of three privets (standard *Ligustrum japonicum*) from Italy, has also provided the starting point for Ms Anderson's subsequent work.

'If the plants are sick, I coddle them'

"I intimidated the garden," says Ms Anderson, talking about the organic suppression of weeds and unwanted shrubs. "I would never use herbicides — poison — in a garden. So much care went into finding the appropriate materials for restoring the cottage, why shouldn't one take the same care with a garden? So I put down carpet to suppress weeds." Layers of carpet or newspapers and hay were laid on paths and beds for three months. If plants were worth saving they were replanted elsewhere.

In other areas, especially on paths, Ms Anderson has used a combination of layers of woven plastic (phormidol) and wood chippings. She repeatedly dug through the soil to attack the overpowering weed species. Despite the view that weed suppressors should be left for a couple of seasons at least, Ms Anderson's plan seems to have worked. She faced ground elder, dock, peatshrub, ivy, rosebay, willow-herb, thistles, nettles, sycamore tree seedlings and, a



Wendy Anderson near Church Brow Cottage, Cumbria. The garden is one of the steepest in England

particular hate of hers, creeping buttercup.

"In some very steep, shady areas where ground elder was too invasive, I used yellow loessstrife. The ground elder couldn't catch its breath.

Plants are like children. If they are sick, it worries me. I coddle or move them," Ms Anderson says. Tonnes of horse manure have been put onto the beds of the upper terrace, which were badly in

need of fertiliser. She also uses regular tonics of bonemeal, seaweed and comfrey.

The formal upper terrace now has two packed beds divided by a gravel walkway. They are full of fragrant plants such as sweet rocket, borage and the "everlasting" white-flowered *Anaphalis triplinervis*. One of her favourites is mallow — *Malva moschata* with its rose-pink, saucer-shaped flowers. The three standard *Ligustrum japonicum* emphasise the architectural quality of the terrace. A strawberry tree (*Arbutus andrachnoides*), planted by the Prince of Wales in 1993, flourishes. Roses, such as 'Felicite Perpetue' and 'Isphahan', and holly (Perry) add to the formality.

The steepness of the garden has meant that, away from the terracing, Ms Anderson has used young plants, so that their roots can adapt to the conditions. Because of the gradient, the stony soil is well-drained. It was assumed that the soil at river level would be damp and boggy. Ms Anderson says not. "The gunnera that I planted always needs extra watering." She has built a wooden stockade to establish a new bed which is the site for a Rosa 'Cerise Bouquet' and a bushy-headed *Clerodendrum*

trichotomum whose fragrant white flowers are followed by decorative blue berries. A circular route through the woodland area using pine log steps has increased access to the bottom part of the garden. Under the fern-like leaves of a *Sorbus vilmorinii* and a magnificent example of the tree *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*, which bears strawberry-like fruits, country plants such as camphor, meadowsweet and foxgloves flourish. In the river-level garden, heavy with rhododendrons and azaleas, Japanese anemones, daffodils, hellebores and endless varieties of geranium shelter. A nut walk is planned among the mature trees and solid evergreens. A quickthorn hedge, interplanted with wild rose and honeysuckle, marks the southern boundary of the garden. Beyond is a manicured orchard of apple trees. The restoration programme at

GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON replies to readers' letters

Q I have an 11-year-old flowering cherry tree which produces lots of fruit. Unfortunately the bark is split in various places on the trunk, and the leaves bear dark spots. It is obviously diseased, but I would hate to cut it down. — Mrs E. M. Suryn, Kingsdon upon Thames, southwest London.

A Your tree is affected by bacterial canker, which can cause limbs to die back in severe infections. It is not easy to control on large trees. The disease makes spots on the leaves in summer, and then transfers to the bark via wounds and leaf scars in autumn and winter. Control, in so far as it is effective, is by spraying the leaves with Bordeaux mixture in spring to control spotting, and again in August and October. If your tree is as badly affected as it sounds, removal may be simpler than control.

Q Some years ago I planted the purple flitter, *Corylus maxima* 'Purpurea', which flourished until I had to move it. Since then it has become a leggy and dull green hedgehog hazel. Is this shrub prone to reversion? — Mr D. Shiels, Gloucester.

A No, it does not revert, but, where light is insufficient, it becomes a dreary greenish purple. Perhaps you have put it in too much shade? The legginess suggests it. Try it in more light, and cut it down to the ground to grow again. The colour of the new shoots should be spectacularly rosy purple. As a rule of thumb, all purple shrubs should be grown in full light if they are to retain their colouring properly.

Q I was given a plant of *Osteospermum* 'Whirligig' in July which established well in the garden but only got round to flowering in October as the frosts arrived. I have taken cuttings for next year, but how should I ensure the flowers come earlier? — Miss B. Denham, Wembley, northwest London.

A This is a most attractive *osteospermum*, with daisy flowers whose individual rays are crimped in the middle. It is, unfortunately, a short-day plant, and it flowers more willingly in the spring and autumn. In high summer it rests. There are other *osteospermums* which do this too, notably the vibrantly coloured 'Tresco Purple'. Both are delightful flowers, but plant them where they are required to perform only at the end of the season. You do right to take cuttings. This variety is far from hardy, whereas *Osteospermum jucundum* and 'Lady Lett' withstand all but the worst winters out of doors.

Q Readers wishing to have gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 9NN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered on a non-legal responsibility. The Times regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

Church Brow was recognised last year by a national Civic Trust award. Ruskin would surely have approved. In 1875 he wrote: "The valley of the Lune in Kirkby is one of the loveliest scenes in England — and therefore the world."

SOPHIE WHITE

FACT BOX

● In 1996, Church Brow Cottage will be open to the public on June 15 and 16, and by appointment with the Vivat Trust (0171-930 2213; fax: 0171-930 2295). Church Brow Cottage can be rented for £10-£355 per week.

● Information on organic gardening: Henry Doubleday Research Association, Ryton Gardens, County CVS 3LG (01203 303517).

● Gardener and designer Wendy Anderson can be contacted at Angel Cottage, 4 Vicarage Lane, Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria LA6 2BA.



Ms Anderson uses layers of carpet to kill weeds

When it comes to the crunch

The secret of a good gravel path is in its foundations

THERE'S nothing to beat the texture of a well laid and well maintained gravel path, scrunching underfoot like a layer of cornflakes. There is always the temptation to turn slowly on one's heel, or the ball of the foot, and listen to the grains of stone grinding. But the scrunch factor depends entirely on the thickness of the gravel, the size of the stones, and what they are laid on. Choose these carefully and you should get what you want.

Gravel paths or drives with a very thick layer of loose gravel on top, perhaps 1-2in, take a lot of maintenance. The idea of a thick luxurious layer may be appealing, but it always bears the marks and channels of the last pair of feet or tyres: it needs frequent raking to make it look good; and it moves too much to be comfortable when you walk on it. This is the thickness of gravel which you could sculpt and texture in a Japanese garden, for ornament.

Half an inch of loose gravel is usually plenty, as long as it is on a hard base. It is little enough not to be too marked by use, and sufficient to look and sound an adequate covering. If the base is the same colour as the gravel, you can sometimes get away with less than half an inch, using a fine gravel. But beware of trying to cover up a base of one colour with a gravel of another. Bits of the base will rise to the surface, and, of course, skid marks will show the colour of the lower layer. Tar-mac is especially difficult to hide with gravel, and is better removed. Alternatively it can be sprayed with tar and a layer of the new colour rolled well in, before a loose top dressing or gravel is applied.

The ideal base for gravel is a 6in layer of a heavier version of the same colour same, rolled and compressed until hard. This base material will comprise stones

perhaps 2-3in across, but it will also contain every size down to dust. This helps the material to bind together to form a solid layer. The better the base preparation, the less problem there will be with weeds. Hoggins is the name often given to this material. On top of this goes the surface gravel. Be sure you know the composition of the gravel you buy. Some will contain powdered stone as well as particles up to the official size, say 6mm or 10mm. Or it can be top-size particles alone. Gravel including dust will set somewhat after it has been laid, and give a firmer, smoother surface, but it will also be dirtier in wet weather, and the dust will rise in clouds in dry, windy weather. Single-size gravel will be cleaner and stay looser, if that is what is required. On the down side, it tends to wash away more easily on slopes.

There are times when a coarser gravel can be more attractive. A couple of years ago I gravelled the area under a new pergola in my garden. The house is in countryside in the middle of nowhere and I did not want anything smart or sophisticated. Finally I chose a river gravel, of rounded stones, from 2in-3in down to about 1in. The colours were a mixture of browns and beige. In a space contained by wall and lawn, where the gravel cannot move sideways, it does not shift underfoot even in a 9in layer. And there has not been a weed to be seen: it is effectively a stone mulch. Not even sycamores manage to germinate in it, and

there is a tree right behind. I put down the same gravel where my car stands, on the basis that it is better not to introduce more types of hard surface into a garden than is necessary. It helps to unify it. It is also cheaper to use one material, as small quantities come much more expensive than larger ones.

If you think you can use a few tonnes of gravel rather than a few bags (and a few tonnes is only a heap the size of Mini), see what your nearest quarry can offer. Nearest is almost always cheapest with gravel, since so much of the final cost is transport. Visit the quarry perhaps — they are exciting places — and look at colours: decide between sharp, crushed gravels or rounded, river gravels. Be wary of expensive gravels tailor-made for landscaping, which can be three times the price of almost identical products intended for construction use.

IF YOU work out what volume you need (multiply the depth by the area), the quarry will tell you how many tonnes are required. Do ask for a lorry small enough to fit your driveway. When my river gravel came, the turn was too tight and the driver had to drop it in the gateway. I had ordered six tonnes, enough to move with a barrow in a couple of hours. The driver pulled the lever, and the lorry disgorged, and disgorged and disgorged! "You're lucky mate," he grinned. "There must be ten tonnes there and you're only paying for six. The quarry chute's not accurate enough for small quantities."

The trouble was, my car was the wrong side of the heap, and I had two children to collect from school in an hour. I had a busy afternoon.

STEPHEN ANDERTON

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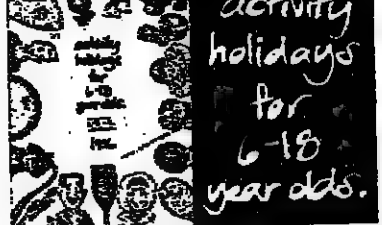
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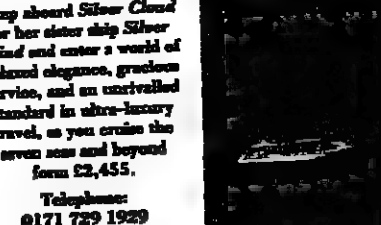
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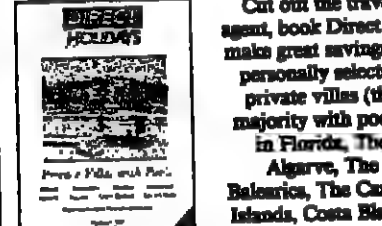
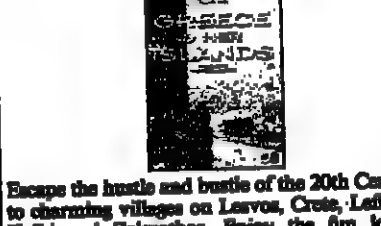
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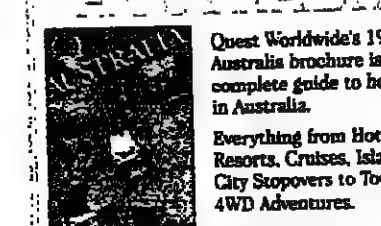
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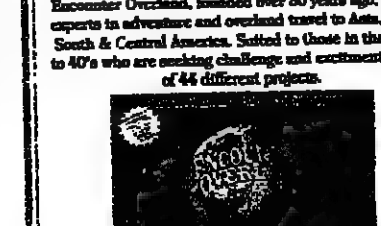

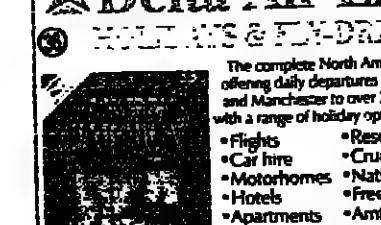
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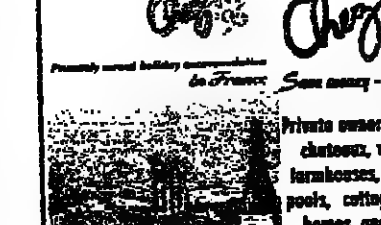
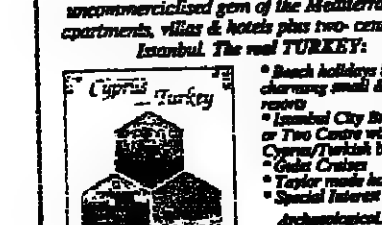
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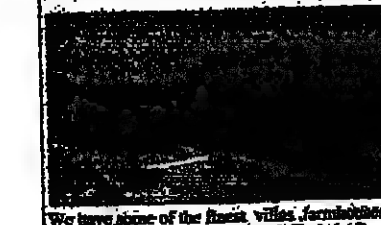
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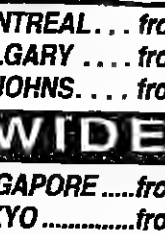
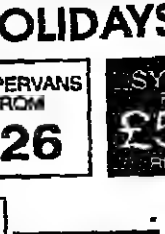
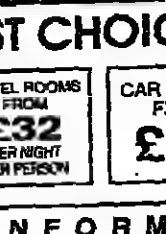
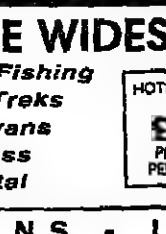
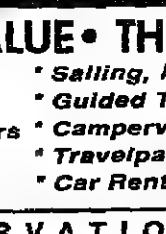
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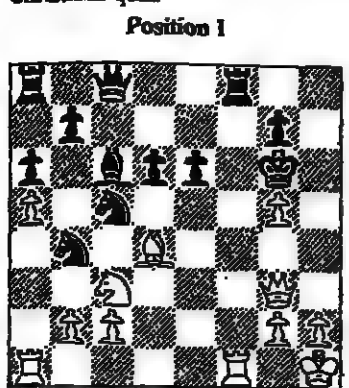
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GAMES

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

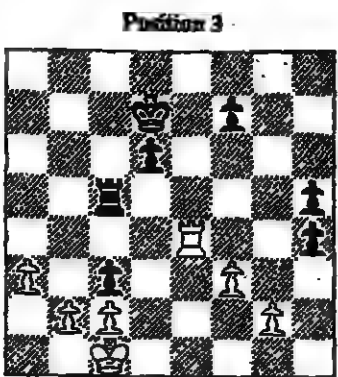
HERE are the answers to the Christmas quiz.



Position 1
In this position, White has sacrificed a piece for an attack but it now looks as if he has run out of steam. What is the best way for White to break the deadlock and crash through against the black king?
Solution: 1 Rf6+ gxf6 2 gxf6+ Kh5 3 Qh3+ Kg4 4 Rf4 Qd7 and now the problem move 5 Rf4 is the fastest way to mate though 5 Qg3+ followed by Rf4 also does the trick.



Position 2
This game created a sensation in the summer when the young Dutch Grandmaster Jeroen Piket defeated the world champion, Garry Kasparov. By this stage Kasparov had already resigned the game. What was the winning coup that he had in mind?
Solution: 1 Nf7 Kf7 2 d8/Q+ Rd8 3 Nd8 Kxh8 4 g3 with a winning king and pawn endgame for White.



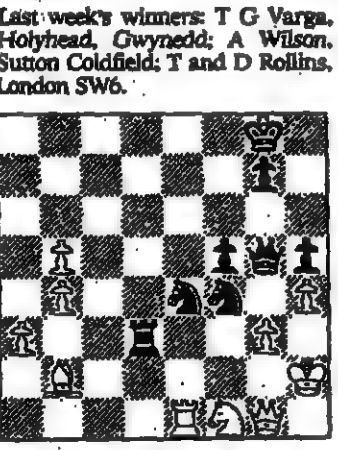
Position 3
Solution: 1 b4 creating two connected passed pawns gives excellent winning chances. In the game Anand played 1 Rxf4 when Black held on for a draw.



Position 4
Here White has sacrificed two pieces to proceed with his attack against the black king.
Solution: 1 Rf6 is the cleanest kill, for example 1... Rf8 2 Rg6+ Qxg6 3 Qxg6+ Kh8 4 Qb6+ Kg8 5 g6 Rf7 6 Qh4 threatening both Qd8 and Qxh4 and if 6... Rg7 7 Qd8 is mate. From the diagram position White can also play 1 g6 Qe7 2 Rf7, but it is far more laborious.
The winner of the Christmas Winning Move puzzle and six magnificents of Moët and Chandon champagne is Dr H.G. ApSimon of Frimshaw, Surrey. The winner of the Christmas quiz is A. Jennings of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. The runners-up will shortly be receiving prize copies of my book about the world championship, Kasparov v. Short.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
This position is a variation from the game Smyslov - Kosten, Hastings Premier 1988. Hastings always provides opportunities for British players to challenge the world's greats. Here we see Tony Kosten about to play a winning combination against ex-world champion Vassily Smyslov. Black to move.
Send your answers on a postcard to The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.
Last week's solution: Nf6



READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon, above. The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The caption will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Cartoon caption (9), Weekend Games Page, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

The editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 17.



"My husband wears the trousers in this house — behind his apron, of course"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by Maurice Taylor of Shrewsbury



THE RETCHNIKOFF MOVEMENT.

Cartoonists are invited to submit their best cartoon for the Punchline. The cartoon should be sent to the editor, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The cartoon should be sent to the editor, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The cartoon should be sent to the editor, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- WHACKO**
a. Caning at Charterhouse
b. Bully beef
c. Excellent
- SETTECENTO**
a. The 18th century
b. The Florentine aristocracy
c. A 60-gun galley
- SEKT**
a. An evangelical sect
b. A freelance band
c. German champagne
- WILLIWI**
a. A Rocky Mountain wind
b. A female ghost
c. An orange shrub

Answers on page 11

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

THIS is a hand from the 1995 Macallan International Pairs. What contract would you like to be in on the North-South cards?

Dir South North-South game IMPs
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♥ A 9
♦ 10
♣ AK 10 8 6 4
W N E S
♠ Q 5 2
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A K J 8 3
♣ Q

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You have ten tricks in aces kings and queens, and if the clubs come in (about 54 per cent), 7NT is there in ten tricks. If the clubs don't divide, you need favourable lies in the other suits, but I think the chances there add up to more than enough to make a grand slam worth bidding. At IMP scoring you only need about a 57 per cent chance.

How would you play 7NT on a club lead? Best is to win in hand, and play queen and ace of spades. Then test the clubs, throwing a diamond and a spade from hand. East turns out to hold the guarded jack of clubs and a doubleton jack of spades.

You now have only 11 top tricks. You need one red finesse to make the twelfth, and a squeeze for the thirteenth. It is a toss-up which red queen you should assume East

holds. However, correct technique is to cash two top cards in one red suit before returning to dummy to take the two spade winners. Then you take the finesse in the other red-suit and hope East has been squeezed.

Two declarers arrived at the position above after testing clubs, but they both misplayed when they took the diamond finesse without cashing their outside winners first. The finesse won but the entries had been removed for the squeeze. The full hand was:

♠ AK 10 4
♥ A 9
♦ 10
♣ AK 10 8 6 4
♠ Q 5 2
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A K J 8 3
♣ Q
♠ J 7
♥ Q 7 4 3
♦ Q 8 7 4
♣ J 8 5 3

Had the declarers cashed ace and king of hearts before playing off the spades, in the four-card ending East would have been squeezed — he would not have been able to keep both the jack of clubs and four diamonds.

● The 1996 Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, in association with The Times and The Sunday Times, will be played at The White House Hotel, Albany Street, London NW1, on January 24, 25 and 26. Tickets from The Macallan Box Office, 31 Queens Road, Mordale, London SW14 8PH. For information, telephone 0181-878 5344.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Whitely's Countdown comes to the PC

ONE of Channel 4's longest running successes, which has been around since the station first went on air, is a humble afternoon quiz series. Despite costlier competition, the word and number game Countdown, hosted by Richard Whiteley, has constantly featured in the station's top ten over the years.

As readers who played the Countdown game in The Times in 1994 will know, it is simple enough. Two contestants select random consonants and vowels then, as the Countdown clock quickly ticks down, try to make the longest valid word possible. Alternatively, in another round, they must incorporate selected numbers to arrive at a randomly generated total.

Because of its time-slot, the quiz has proved a cult hit with university students. Now, instead of playing along at home, you can square up to the game for yourself. The first of three PC versions of Countdown has been developed by Lockton Software for DOS, and is on floppy disc and CD-Rom.

You can play against the computer or a human player. The game has three levels and both practice and competition modes. In keeping

with the style of the show, the game has a garish studio clock and that tune, as well as a Dictionary Corner where obscure words are defined and a numbers genius shows where your maths could be improved.

Also in the Countdown pipeline are two add-on variations. One will let you play against past champions in the games used in the final; the other will let you test your word power using a French, Spanish or German dictionary.

A more modest budget title, which offers simple word and number games, is Cosmi's 5 Games compendium for Windows. In Spell Master you are presented with up to 15 letters with which to create words of either four or five letters against the clock.

Symcal is a mathematical game of logic featuring international flags of varying values. Equations must be solved by deducting the value of the flags. Crib is a faithful version of the six-card game, in which two players battle it out to

get 121 points first. The last two are Memory Master, a picture-pairing challenge, and The Cube, an adaptation of the Eighties cube craze matching colour faces on six sides.

A reminder that the countdown is underway for our first competition of the year, Cyberspace Twenty. Computer Games and Pastimes, Weekend. The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. You may also fax entries on 0171-729 6791. Illegible entries will be disqualified and the judges will not enter into correspondence.

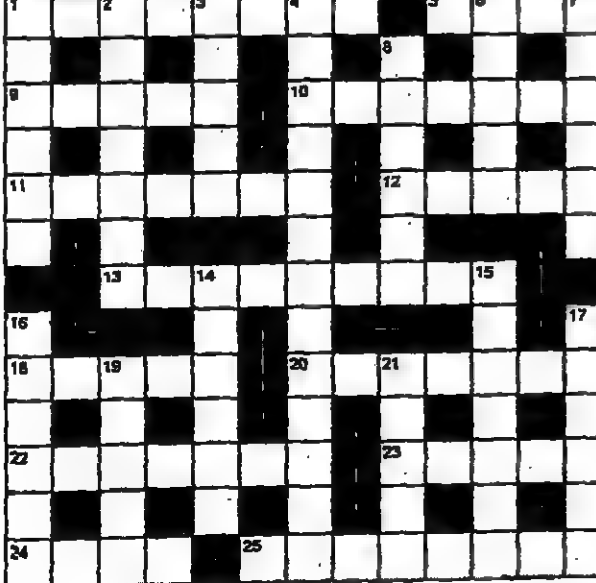
Finally, another new title exploring words and numbers is Sierra's multimedia gem aimed at children aged seven and eight (Key Stage 2).

English and Maths is a neatly crafted interactive journey hosted by a friendly alien character called Adi. The title comes on two discs. The first is more fun-oriented and set in Adi's house, a silly place with crazy pets and game diversions. The second disc takes users to Adi's College of Knowledge, where the real work begins with a quiz-format approach to English and maths and 1,500 questions based on the National Curriculum. The subjects tested include spelling, writing, reading and language plus numbers, computations, measuring, patterns and algebra.

Correct answers are rewarded with appearances by a cockerel and bright sound effects. After each exercise parents can call up a score screen to learn where children are excelling or falling behind and in need of encouragement. There are also animated lessons, multimedia presentations and a creativity toolbox in which children can make their own multimedia presentations or try out their improved word-power by keeping a journal.

"What does Crustimoney Pro-seedcake mean?" said Pooh. "For I am a Bear of Very Little Brain, and long words Bother me."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 677

- ACROSS**
1 Torrent of criticism (8)
5 Sink stopper (4)
9 RU formation; melle (5)
10 Rough-skinned pear (7)
11 Stalemate (7)
12 Nottingham river (5)
13 24 hours ago (9)
16 Garden-pest insect (5)
20 A spendthrift (7)
22 Professional, personal colleague (7)
23 With mouth open (5)
24 Cheese skin (4)
25 Close (10) (5)
- DOWN**
1 Vaporise/condense (to purify) (6)
2 Withers through disease (7)
3 Rome's co-founder; story-telling Uncle (5)
4 A Huxley horrible-future novel (5,3,5)
6 Holiday; depart (5)
7 Development; increase (6)
8 Customary (poet) (6)
14 Short track off main-line (6)
15 An amount (of material); use of (cattle) space (7)
16 Hinder; basket (6)
17 Flowing easily (6)
19 A Great Lake (5)
21 La —, Milan opera-house (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 676
ACROSS: 5 Up and running 8 Emblem 9 Renown 10 Nash 12 Hexagon 14 Recover 15 Kern 17 Svelte 18 Exhale 20 Repetitious
DOWN: 1 Outmanoeuvre 2 Pall 3 Quarter 4 Inmate 6 Dome 7 Newfoundland 11 Shoulder 13 Defence 16 Zeus 19 Hall

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THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

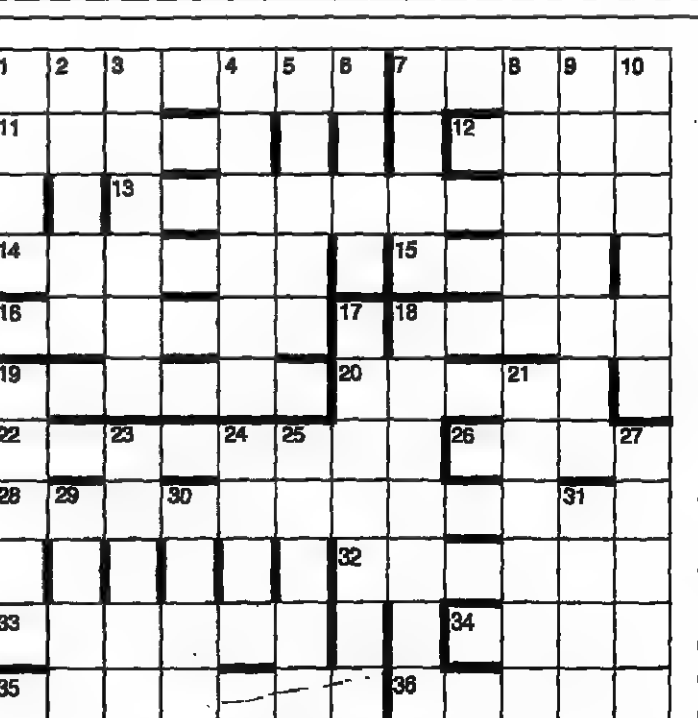
No. 3340: A Colour Symphony by Bandmaster

- ACROSS clues and all answers are normal. Each down clue contains one redundant word but is otherwise normal. The redundant words, in clue order, form ten definitions (one of three words, the rest of two words or phrases which solvers may identify as an interlinking (but asymmetric) pattern within the completed grid. All conflicts in the pattern should be treated as being resolved in the natural way. All words and phrases are in the latest edition of Chambers English Dictionary, except for 28A (in previous editions of Chambers and OED).
- ACROSS**
1 Block school's revise and bounce back (7)
7 Individual type? Dredging-box has no trademark (5)
11 You and me, united, with endless beverage — drink! (5)
12 Dropping tax to shoo away bankruptcy — it sounds meaningless (4)
13 Paper replaces England's leader in hunt for minor potentate (10)
14 The soul guides countrymen (6)
15 Support's lacking for the foundation (4)
16 Time to drink tea — a traditional longing (8)
18 Racy diarist (no saint) spoke more than once (5)
19 Jazz musicians approve about former partner's comeback (6)
20 Absolute competitor (5)
22 Wad stuffed with money? It's my job to optimise stock yields (8)
26 Germany's European backing, bitterly regretted (4)
28 Material once thrust into grip, note (12)
32 When Pope errs, forgetting work, am I the result? (6)

- DOWN**
1 With no financial feel, girl expresses hesitation (4)
2 Safety administration takes friend around plant (5)
3 Non-stick design device makes chutes unfurl fast (6)
4 Quietly thrust fire dog down (6)
5 Plant held by mining man is edelweiss (5)
6 Fish disease makes tail of bonito harder on the outside (4)
7 Acute singer/acress, dear to the French (4)
8 Fish infection has reduced fish around river (5)
9 Touchy diplomat's I found false with the French (7)
10 Exotic trail meandering in the heart of Macao (6)
17 Radio translator, golden girl (7)
18 Yawning seal marring entertaining shows (7)
19 Maud's non-uniformed working here (5)
21 "Little Gold God" — employment for writer (6)
23 Bear cold, acoustic arrangement (5)
24 Plant — fine before driving rain — half's gone (4)
25 Note two-way insurance for friar (5)
27 Churchmen learned about Welsh minister (5)
29 A grand lady, albeit aristocratic (4)
30 King, maybe, to enter score royalty (4)
31 Clothworker, we hear, dyed tissue (4)

- Solution to No. 3337: Christmas Cards by Smokey**
- ACROSS**
1 PALISADOES (AI) (Capone) in Pisa, does — LISA
2 CEDAIR (hidden)
3 ARIAN (Asian, alias)
4 ESTRANGES — SERGEANTS (serge, miss)
5 DISSENT — TIREDMEN (tire-reduces)
6 TERAI (hidden)
7 DOMES (homes, doves)
8 PINNA (pinny, pinna)
9 BEVIN (Levin, begin)
10 COALAGES (garages, galleons)
11 GALAGIES (garages, galleons)
12 KINEMAS (kine mas)
13 CORONAS (coronets, minus ch) — ROMA
14 CORTINA (camp) — TINA
15 GAIJANBOUT (pd, rev in govt)
16 RETSINA — NASTIER (NAS, tier)
17 RESORS — BORERS (bore round)
18 ENCIASH (en, c, sh)
19 ALLOY (allow, alloy)
20 MICHE — CHIME (2 mugs)
21 KIDE — DIRE (2 mugs)
22 PULSATION — PLATINOUS

- DOWN**
1 PADDOCK (padlock, haddock)
2 DISMAL (disarm, distal)
3 LASERS (lagers, lasers)
4 TIMES (2 mugs) — JNES
5 ASTRINGENT (agent round Strindberg) — INGE
6 EKRJAND (RR in end)
7 SARABAND (arab in sand) — SARA
8 CAJNTE (anag less 1)
9 DERMIS (fermis, dertis)
10 RUSSIAN (P) Prussian) — SIAN
11 PEJAKS (jake, prev)
12 IVECO — VOICE (in vice)
13 MOIT — OMIT (M.I in OT)
14 BARCAROLE (bar, carolled) — CAROL
15 NIECE (piece, nieve)
16 MANNA-ASH (man, Nash round al) — ANNA
17 OURS — SOUR (so, middle of ours)
18 CAJNEBRIJKE (anag of Becker round n)
19 GJABRYIA (IGR on ry)
20 GJABRYIA (anag) — ENA
21 RAINDIER (RN, — anag)
22 SATIATES (rev of E in SS)
23 OSCINE — CONIES (E in con)
24 ENSUE (en suite, minus it) — SUE
25 OLUPES — SLOPE (2 mugs)
26 OMASA — SAMOA (SA mas)



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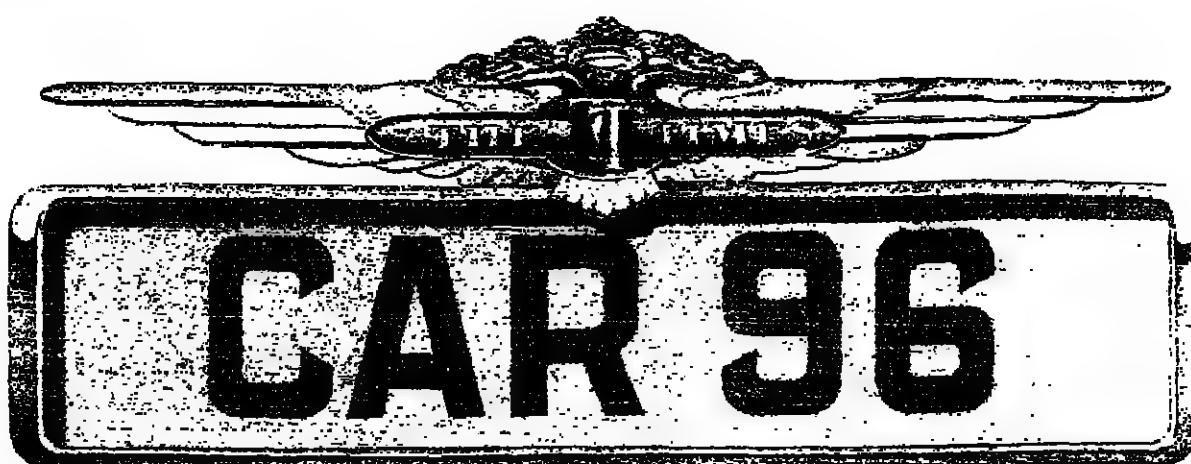
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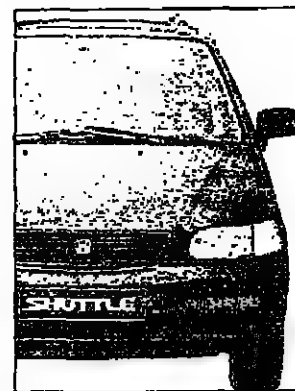
High-speed history of the daring girl racers

Page 7



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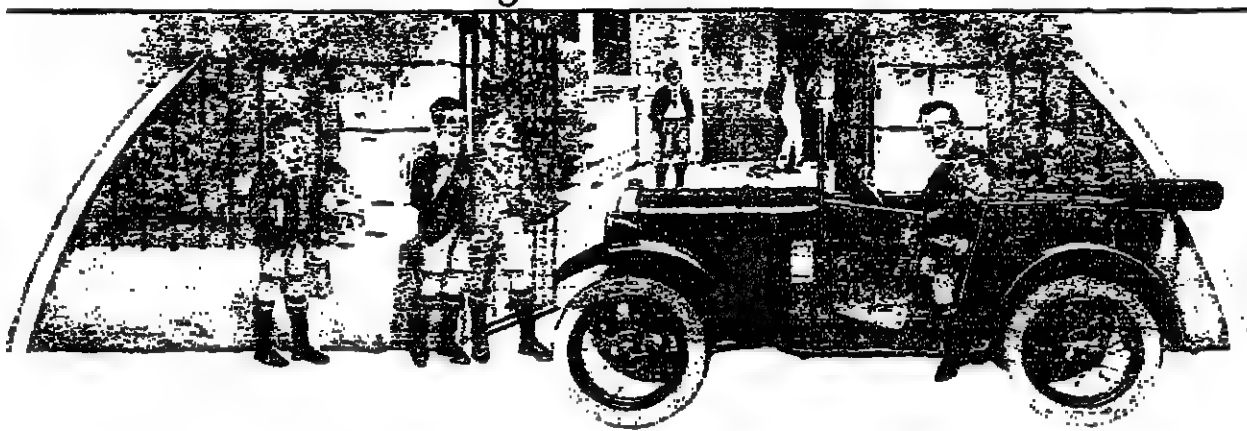
SATURDAY JANUARY 13 1996

Britain's car industry is 100 years old. Kevin Eason looks in the rear-view mirror and at the road ahead

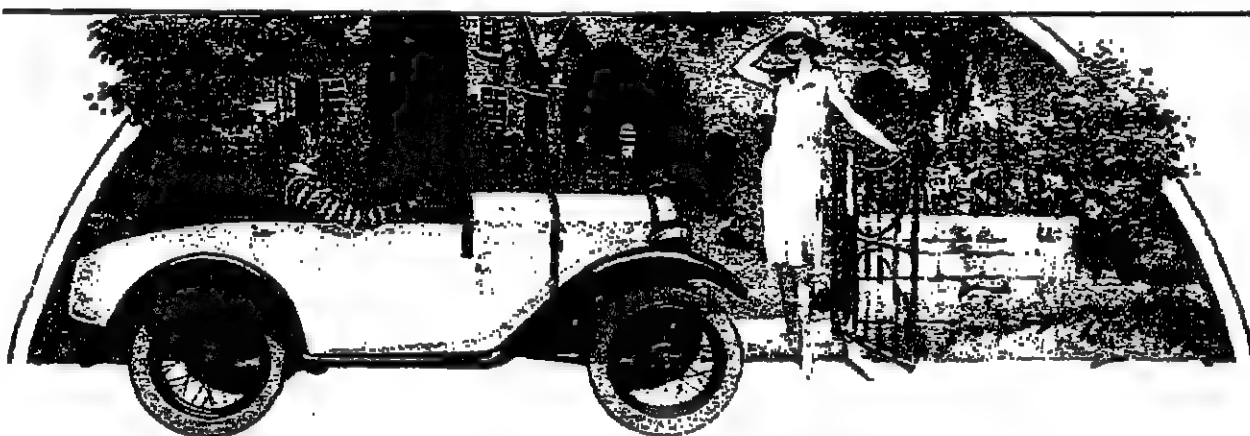
'First the infant'



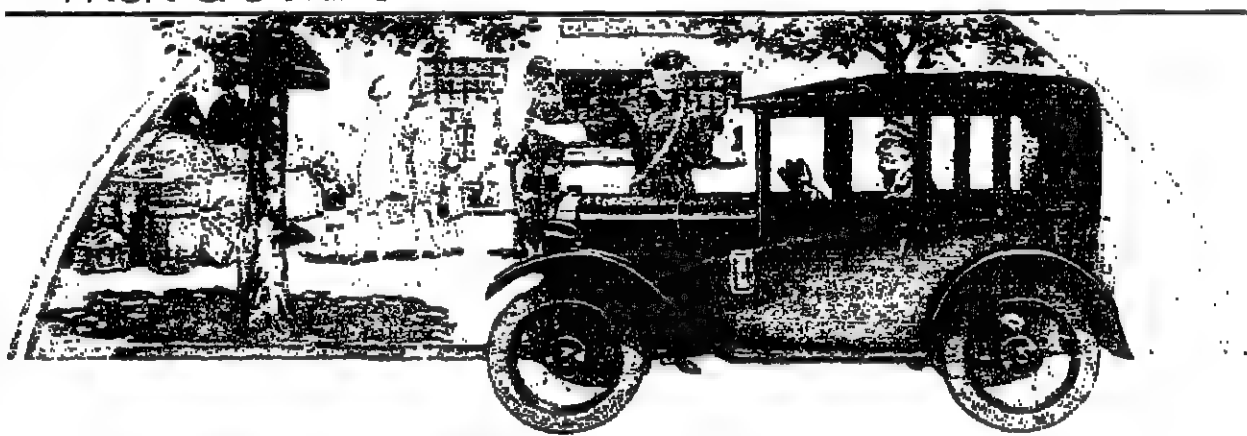
'Then the schoolboy'



'And then the lover'



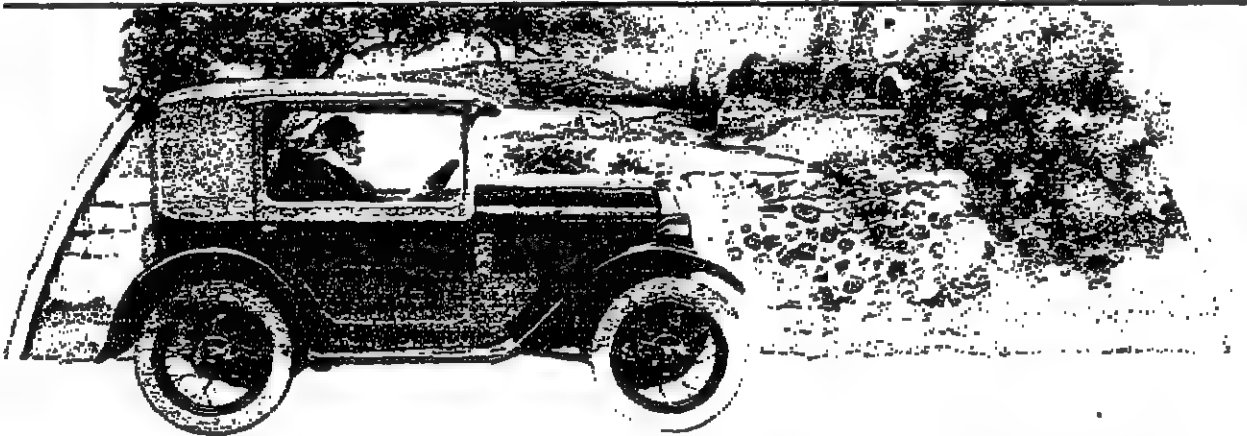
'Then a soldier'



'The sixth age'



'Last scene of all'



From tottering, wide-eyed infancy to raging, powerful maturity... and then weakened, gasping dotage. Adopting Shakespeare's description of the seven ages of man from *As You Like It* for his advertising, Herbert Austin could not have known how close he was to charting the history of the car.

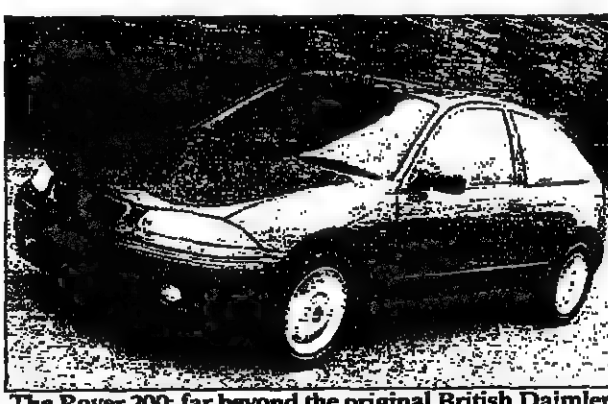
Britain's motor industry was founded 100 years ago tomorrow, when the Daimler Motor Company was incorporated to make the new-fangled horseless carriages. Soon the car business was among the biggest and most powerful, with machines pouring from assembly lines to feed a world desperate for the freedom and independence that the internal combustion engine offered.

By the Fifties, Britain was world leader, exporting more cars than any other nation, including the US, and marques such as Austin and Morris, Jaguar, Riley, Wolseley, Singer, Humber, Standard, Sunbeam, Hillman, Triumph, Vauxhall and Rover were household names.

With maturity, though, came complacency and a decrepitude that almost cost the nation its biggest single manufacturing industry — the men of metal apparently suffering collective Alzheimer's. The Seventies and Eighties will be remembered as decades of bankruptcy and closure, of rescues and huge government subsidies.

For all its problems — marked this week by road protests on the Newbury bypass — the car has given vast numbers of ordinary people the chance to travel easily and relatively cheaply in ways that previous generations would barely have been able to understand.

Working-class children, who would not have been recognised as a cow, were piling into the family runabout on a Sunday for a tour around the



The Rover 200: far beyond the original British Daimler

country lanes where they could stare over the blur of the hedges at grazing animals; mum and dad filled the car with children and buckets and spades and trundled off to the seaside for a day of candy floss and a donkey ride on the sand.

In the first age of the car, the pioneers could not have visualised what they were starting. Their cars were puttering — and deeply unreliable — engines on wheels with uncertain brakes and as much comfort as a bed of nails.

EVENTS OF THE CENTENARY
THE YEAR starts with a service in Coventry Cathedral on Wednesday, in which historic cars will be blessed. Plus:
● Cars of the Century exhibition at Coventry's Museum of British Transport until February 29.
● Celebration of Wolseley now at the Heritage Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire.
● Victorian Motoring Extravaganza at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, from May 4 to 6.
● Rally of 200 historic cars, from Edinburgh, stopping at stately homes, to Stratford-upon-Avon, from June 14 to 23.
● Retrocar 96, cavalcade of every British car made, at National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on July 27/28.

Gottlieb Daimler would marvel at the machines we now take for granted with their soft-suspensioned, air-conditioned luxury, strength and security — but also wonder where everyone has gone. Once dozens of names were

churning out cars; now there are only a handful of mass manufacturers in the UK. And they are foreign-owned, from Ford, the oldest immigrant, to Vauxhall — owned by General Motors since the Twenties — and Peugeot, which took over

the remnants of the Rootes Group via Chrysler, plus the Japanese — Honda, Toyota and Nissan.

Even Rover, whose history goes back to the safety bicycle launched by the Starley family in 1885, could not make it into the 21st century as an independent UK manufacturer. It is now owned by BMW of Germany — a company that began making cars by manufacturing a model under licence from Herbert Austin. That was when Austin was one of the world's biggest car names, selling technology that helped the Japanese motor industry get under way and sending its cars all over the Commonwealth and beyond.

From the same factory at Longbridge in Birmingham which poured out Austin Sevens now comes the new generation, the Rover 200, a clever

little hatchback with 20 or 30 times the power of the original British Daimler.

But this is the seventh age which, by Shakespeare's definition, is dotage. Does that mean the Rover 200 and its generation are nearing the end of the 100-year-old line? The joining of the circle in which the machine that was once man's liberator has now become his tormentor, creating pollution, congestion and envy, seems complete. But that does not take into account the ingenuity of the industry, exemplified by those pioneers who, 100 years ago, adapted skills learnt making sewing machines and bicycles into manufacturing a machine that many of them had never even seen before, let alone driven. This is the time for fresh ideas and innovations to find cars for a future which could last another 100 years.

CENTENARY ISSUE

Pages 2, 3, 5 and 7

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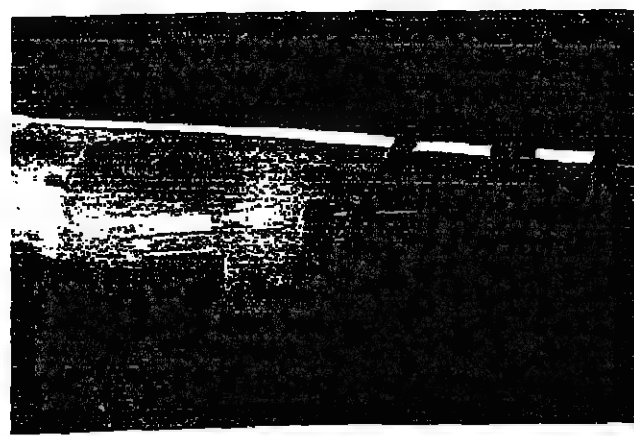
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One hundred years ago, the man with the red flag took his last steps . . .

A century of the horseless traveller

**Motoring Editor
Kevin Eason looks
back at triumphs
and failures since
Daimler began an
historic revolution**

1896-1900

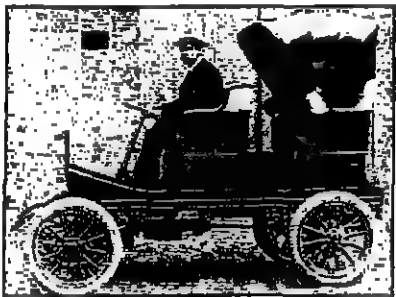
January 14, 1896 Incorporation of the Daimler Motor Syndicate to manufacture motor cars.

1896 Thirty-year-old law restricting speed of motor vehicles to 4mph and requiring a man to walk in front carrying a red flag ends; new 20mph limit. First London to Brighton run to commemorate change in law. Henry Ford builds first car.

1897 Austin makes first car for Wolseley. First Lanchester and first factory-made Daimler appear. Henry Sturmer, editor of *The Autocar*, completes first Land's End to John o'Groats journey. Lanchester brothers start building cars. Frederick Simms founds the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, later the RAC.

1898 First world land speed record of 39.9mph set by Count Chasseloup-Laubat.

1899 First fatalities in a car accident when E.R. Sewell is demonstrating a Daimler. Rear wheels collapse going downhill under heavy braking at Harrow-on-the-Hill, London. First four-wheel Humber appears and Fiat and Renault founded. John Scott-Montagu shows off his Daimler motor car to Edward VII.



Designer Alex Craig and first Standard

1900-1905

1900 First Napier car. First recorded fine for drink-driving of £1 on man named Kelly in Dublin for driving "furiously".

1901 Wolseley and Arrol-Johnston start carmaking. Daimler in Germany adopts Mercedes name after the daughter of Emil Jannetzky, an early customer in France but also to appease French customers after Franco-German wars.

1902 Bentley-on-Sea is venue for Britain's first serious race meeting. Cadillac company founded.

1903 First Rover, Vauxhall and Standard cars appear. First motor race using the concept of a circuit held in Ireland, won by a Mercedes at an average speed of 49.2mph.

1904 Frederick Henry Royce makes his first car and meets the Honorable C.S. Rolls for the first time at the Midland Hotel, Manchester. First automatic transmission introduced by the Sturtevant company of the US.

1905 New organisation founded to represent motorists: it is named the Automobile Association and the first job of its "scouts" is to warn members of police speed traps. First Jowett is made and Vauxhall moves to Luton. Austin company founded.

1906 Rolls-Royce introduces its new 40/50 horse power car at the Olympia Show and calls it the Silver Ghost.

1907-1916

1907 First supercharged engine built by Chadwick company of the USA. First Japanese car — the Takuri — is launched. Brooklands motor racing circuit opens, starting era of the Bentley Boys.

1908 Henry Ford introduces new car, the Model T. It is immediate best-seller. Samuel Cody becomes first man to fly an aircraft in Britain. His British Army Aeroplane No 1 rises to 30 feet, flies for a quarter of a mile . . . and crashes. Cody survives unhurt.

1909 Daimler adopts the famous Knight sleeve-valve engine and acquires Lanchester.

1910 Henry Ford opens car plant at Trafford Park, Manchester. First production car to be successfully fitted with four-wheel brakes is the Scottish-made Argyll and is adopted by Arrol-Johnston, Crossley, Spyker and Sheffield Simplex. Unfortunately, main brake control rod passes through the steering mechanism so that the steering wheel locks when the brakes are applied. The system is abandoned. Charles Rolls, playboy and pioneer, is the first Briton killed in a flying accident. Ferdinand Porsche wins the Prince Henry Trial in a Daimler.

1911 First Monte Carlo Rally. Juan Manuel Fangio, five times world Formula One champion, is born in Argentina. Chevrolet founded. Cadillac is the world's first car with electric lights.

1912 William Morris launches his Oxford model with 1018cc engine. It is nicknamed the Bullnose Morris. The *Titanic*, the liner proclaimed "unsinkable", goes down with 1,500 people drowned.

1913 British car production up to 25,000. Henry Ford introduces a moving assembly line.

1914 First traffic lights are switched on in Cleveland, Ohio. Robert Bamford and Lionel Martin found Aston Martin. Europe is turned into a battlefield with the start of the First World War, the first motorised conflict.

1915 Packard's Twin Six is the first car with alloy pistons.

1916 Willys-Knight introduces mechanical windscreen wipers.



Getting away from it all: by 1925 the car — even an old Bullnose Morris — was giving people freedom to travel on roads that would eventually lead to traffic jams, accidents and wheel clamps

1917-1926

1917 Board of Trade calls for a reduction in motoring for pleasure as the war deepens. A push-button electronic gear selector is introduced in the US.

1918 General Motors takes over the Chevrolet company.

1919 W.O. Bentley exhibits his 3-litre prototype. Professor Ernest Rutherford splits the atom.

1920 Alvis, founded by Thomas George John, a naval architect, makes its first car. The Duesenberg Model A is the first with hydraulic brakes.

1921 Lanchester first to offer a left-hand drive option on its cars. Berlin gets the first motorway, the Avus Autobahn.

1922 Ford of America builds 1.2 millionth Model T. Herbert Austin introduces the Seven, priced £225, which continues in production until 1938. First car fitted with a Marconiphone radio is a Daimler. Cadillac introduces automatic choke.

1923 Leaded petrol goes on sale.

1924 The Maxwell company changes its name to Chrysler. Private railway companies are reorganised into four groups — the North Western, London and North Eastern, Great Western and Southern Railway. Imperial Airways becomes Britain's first commercial airline.

1925 Czech armaments firm Skoda makes its first car. Aston Martin goes bust but is rescued and relocated to Feltham, Middlesex. White lines are painted on the roads to try to guide cars and prevent accidents.

1926 Mercedes and Benz come together to form Daimler-Benz (strangely, Messrs Daimler and Benz never met). Russia builds its first car, the NAMI-1. Daimler introduces the first V12 engine, arrow indicators appear on British Talbot cars and car heaters appear in the US. Morris buys Wolseley. Cadillac introduces first car with safety glass. British industry is closed by the General Strike. John Logie Baird demonstrates television, sending pictures by radio. Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) is formed.

1927-1936

1927 Bentley starts historic run of four wins at Le Mans, immortalising the Bentley Boys. Major Henry Segrave breaks the world land speed record, achieving 203.841mph in a Sunbeam beating his rival, Malcolm Campbell. London to Brighton run revived by the *Daily Sketch* newspaper to commemorate the Emancipation Act. Road deaths total 5,329 and there are 133,943 accidents, even though there are fewer than 1 million cars. The first words on film — "You ain't heard nothing yet" — spoken by Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*.

1928 Alvis introduces the first front-wheel-drive car, the 12/75, and William Lyons moves his SS Cars (later Jaguar) from Blackpool to Coventry. It is a good year for Dixies: BMW makes its first car (an Austin Seven under licence) called the Dixi, and Dixie Dean scores 60 goals as Everton win the first division championship. Cubitt, the construction firm,



Henry Segrave, 203.84mph speed pioneer

launches its own car, but it is in production just six years.

1929 Rootes motor dealers buy Humber and Hillman. General Motors buys Vauxhall. David Dunbar Buick, Scotsman who made his fortune from inventing the enamelled bathtub, dies having founded a car company which threw him out and then became part of the General Motors empire. Cadillac introduces synchromesh gears.

1930 A new company, called MG — for Morris Garages — set up by Cecil Kimber to make sports cars. R101 airship crashes in France, killing 48. Amy Johnson, a 26-year-old Englishwoman, flies solo around the world. Bugatti creates the Royale and Cadillac produces a V16 model.

1931 Ford Motor Company opens a new plant at Dagenham, east London. Traffic lights to be introduced after successful pilot scheme in London. Rolls-Royce takes over struggling Bentley.

1932 Alfa Romeo produces first single-seat racing car. George V makes the first broadcast by wireless to the Empire.

1933 Morris introduces flashing indicators and Alvis synchromesh gears as standard. Percy Shaw saved from driving off the road in fog by the flashing eyes of a passing "moggy" and invents Cat's Eyes — and becomes a millionaire. Lyons opens its Corner House with waitresses working on a production line system.

1934 Aerodynamics are all the rage: Chrysler introduces its Airflow model and Tata a saloon with a record-breaking drag coefficient of 0.38. Citroën introduces its revolutionary front-wheel-drive Traction Avant. Pedestrian crossings with Belisha beacons — named after Leslie Hore-Belisha, a former Minister of Transport — introduced. *Queen Mary* launched by Cunard on Clydebank.

1935 Driving test arrives and a speed limit of 30mph imposed in towns. William Lyons makes his first SS Jaguar, while Rootes takes over Sunbeam. Triumph offers windscreen washers. Colonel T.E. Lawrence — Lawrence of Arabia — is killed in a motorcycle accident. Fiat introduces the first headlight flasher. Sir Malcolm Campbell raises world land speed record to 301mph.

1936 Mercedes launches first diesel car, Morgan builds first four-wheel car,

1937-1946

1937 A thousand Daimlers used for coronation of George VI. George Eyston raises world land speed record to 312mph.

1938 The People's Car — the Volks (people) wagen (car) — is launched in Germany. Designed by Ferdinand Porsche on the orders of Hitler, the car cost 1,000 Reichsmarks and buyers saved five marks a week for their KdF Wagen as it was known for its title: Kraft durch Freude. Strength through Joy, the motto of the Nazi Party. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister returns from talks with Hitler and proclaims peace with Germany. Sir Nigel Gresley's Mallard touches 126mph on a run between London and Newcastle.

1939 Buick develops "winter" indicators, but few cars: the Second World War begins in September.

1940 US Army takes delivery of its first Jeep — a nickname derived from the title of General Purpose (GP) vehicle — from the Bantam Car Company (Ford and Willys took over production in 1941). Car factories are turned over to war production and petrol is rationed. This is also the worst year for road accidents — 8,609 dead although there are only 2.3 million cars. Oldsmobile offers first modern automatic transmissions.

1941 Volkswagen starts production but not of people's cars: Kubelwagen and Schwimmwagen military vehicles are first off assembly lines. Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, which brings US into the war.

1942 With civilian car production virtually ended, Daimler makes four-wheel-drive scout cars, first Daimlers with disc brakes. Meanwhile, skirts get shorter to save material and two inches are lopped off shirt tails.

1943 Car factories make tanks, shells, aircraft . . . even coffins. An accident in Bethnal Green tube station kills 178 people. Pay As You Earn income tax is introduced and a new wonder drug, penicillin, is saving lives.

1944 Volvo of Sweden introduces its

PV444, its first big export seller. On June 6, D-Day, 18,000 troops land in France.

1945 Second World War ends and car production restarts slowly. Not for Louis Renault though: he is accused of being a collaborator with the Germans and his company is nationalised. A team of British officers restart car production in the Volkswagen factory and create the world's most successful production model, the Beetle. The Bristol Aeroplane Company launches a car division, taking BMW technology as part of war reparations.

1946 Triumph 1800 is first British car with steering column gearchange. First car made in India comes from Hindustan company making version of Morris Series M.

1947-1956

1947 Standard launches Vanguard, 2-litre six-seater saloon, while engineering magnate David Brown acquires floundering Aston Martin. Britain suffers coldest winter since 1888.

1948 Rover launches a "stop-gap" model until assembly lines recover from war production; the vehicle is shown at the Amsterdam Motor Show and is called Land Rover. Young designer Alec Issigonis launches the Morris Minor. Star of London Motor Show at Earls Court is the Jaguar XK120, which has a top speed of 120mph.

1949 Citroën launches 2CV, start of 40 years' production. The FX taxi, the famous London black cab, appears and more than 90,000 go on to be manufactured. The Comet, the world's first passenger jet, flies.

1950 Britain becomes the world's biggest car exporter, overtaking US. Rover launches Jet 1, a gas turbine car capable of 150mph and Ford introduces combined coil spring and damper known as the McPherson strut after designer Earle S. McPherson, an employee at the Dagenham works. First world racing champion is Giuseppe Farina and the Whitsun Bank Holiday brings the worst traffic

jams on record. There are about 2.5 million cars on British roads and petrol rationing has just ended.

1951 Chrysler offers power steering and China makes first car. Crash helmets become compulsory in motor racing.

1952 Austin and Morris merge to form British Motor Corporation. Disc brakes, designed by Dunlop, fitted to Jaguar entries in the Mille Miglia and the C-type which won the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race in 1953. The Perth to London express crashes at Harrow, 112 die.

1953 First tubeless tyres marketed in Britain come from Dunlop, while Michelin develops the radial tyre. Ford launches the Anglia. In the US, a legend arrives — the Chevrolet Corvette.

1954 Mercedes produces gullwing 300SL with fuel injection. Standard launches first British production diesel car. Optimism abounds as rationing ends.

1955 Rootes takes over bankrupt Singer company. Toyota produces first Japanese-designed car. First production car with self-leveling suspension is the Citroën DS. A young racing driver, Stirling Moss, wins the Mille Miglia (1,000 mile-race through Italy) averaging 100mph on public roads.

1956 German production and exports overtake those from Britain. Rover shows off its T3, a four-wheel-drive turbo-engined saloon.

1957-1966

1957 Stirling Moss drives a Vanwall to the first grand prix victory for a British car. Volvo offers seat belts on its cars and Harold Macmillan tells us we "never had it so good".

1958 Mike Hawthorn becomes Britain's first Formula One world champion and retires immediately; he dies in a car accident a year later on the Quilford bypass. Colin Chapman launches Lotus Elite, first car with a monocoque glass fibre bodyshell. The Ford Edsel appears in the US to become one of the biggest all-

Continued on facing page



The Beetle — thanks to British officers



The 1948 Morris Minor designed by Alex Issigonis, later to produce the Mini

... Britain's age of the car had begun. It's been a long and eventful road

The industry that began by being sent to Coventry

Tomorrow is the centenary of the incorporation of Daimler, the UK's first company specifically organised to manufacture motor cars. While Edward Butler, the Lanchester brothers, Frederick Brenner and John Henry Knight had built cars before that date, their aim was simply to develop a functioning horseless carriage. None had taken the next step and organised a company to manufacture cars in series for sale to the general public.

Daimler, on the other hand, had built no cars (nor would it produce any until 1897) but was organised as a manufacturing concern in the confident expectation that it would dominate the coming British industry. Its trump card was to be the acquisition of "master patents" by its associate, the British Motor Syndicate, which would issue licences without which no car could be built or sold.

Founded in July 1895 with a capital of £150,000, the Syndicate had recently acquired the British Daimler rights from Frederick R. Simms for £35,000 as the first step in this ambitious plan. Simms not only imported Daimler engines from Germany but also owned a licence fee from owners of cars powered by engines built under Daimler's patents — which included leading French makes such as Panhard-Levassor and Peugeot — to permit them to be driven on the roads of Britain.

This was a questionable benefit, for — while there were then few restrictions on the use of cars in France — in Britain motor cars were subject to the same rules as traction engines: they had to be preceded by a man on foot. But the man behind the Syndicate — a diminutive company promoter named

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu on how a business worth billions started in an old cotton mill

Harry J. Lawson — was planning for a near future in which this onerous restriction would be lifted, triggering a massive upsurge in the sales of horseless carriages.

Lawson, who billed himself as "the Pioneer of *fin-de-siècle* Locomotion", had made a fortune out of floating a score of heavily over-capitalised companies; his early career in the Coventry cycle industry had been a great advantage when it came to profiting from the boom in bicycle and pneumatic tyre companies in the early 1890s. He foresaw the beneficial changes to society that would result from the introduction of the motor car and floated a British motor industry consisting of a string of subsidiary companies which could produce a ceaseless flow of royalties.

Despite warnings in the financial press ("The fact that Mr H.J. Lawson is the controlling spirit is a very bad omen for the company and augurs a speedy acquaintance with the bankruptcy court rather than the success the patent deserves"), the Daimler share issue raised its full capital of £100,000 within the 48 hours allotted. Of this, £40,000 was paid to Lawson's Syndicate as "licence money", even though Daimler at that point did not have a factory.

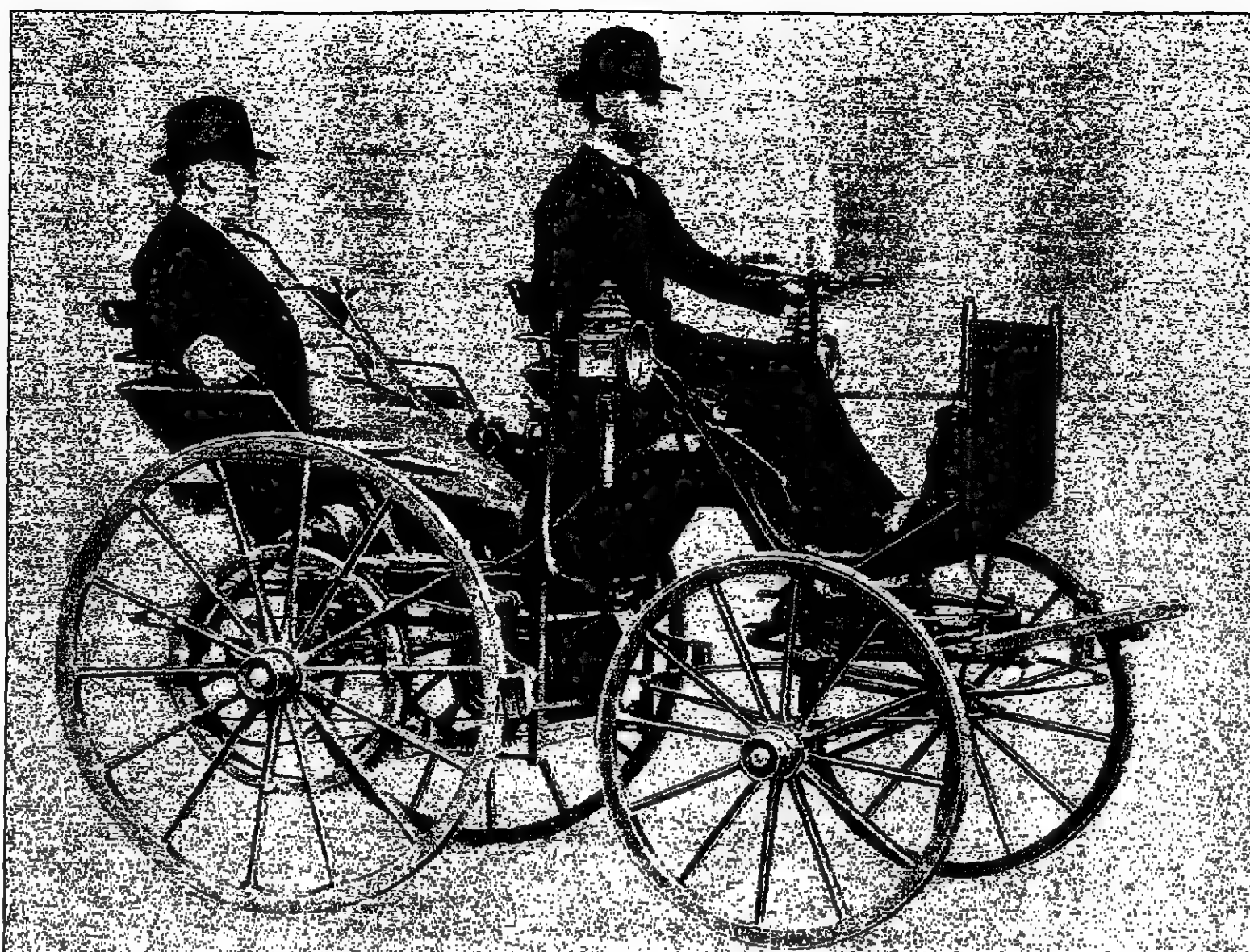
Frederick Simms, retained by the new Daimler Company as consulting engineer, was

sent out to find a suitable building and recommended a purpose-built engine works at Cheltenham, for sale as a going concern with a skilled staff of 80 workmen. But Lawson had a more devious plan in mind. He bought a vacant cotton mill at Coventry for £18,000 while Simms was out of the country; Simms protested, but in vain. The four-storey mill, a most unsuitable building for the production of motor vehicles, belonged to Lawson's crony Terah Hooky, who had acquired it as a speculation ... and that was the sole reason Coventry became the centre of the British motor industry.

The plan was for Daimler to produce engines and chassis; the grandly-titled Great Horseless Carriage Company (with an issued capital of £750,000, of which £500,000 went straight into the British Motor Syndicate's coffers) would use these as the basis of a range of cars and commercial vehicles.

Part of what became the "Motor Mills" were occupied by associated companies, most notably that run by the "motor charlatan" Edward Joel Pennington, an American confidence trickster whose "Torpedo Autocars" operated on principles that defied common sense. Their inordinately long stroke engines were completely devoid of any form of cooling, but ran well enough to convince investors to plunge vast sums of money into Pennington's get-rich-quick ventures. And that included the normally astute Lawson, who paid £100,000 for the rights to Pennington's dubious patents.

While the shady financial dealings were going on, the unsung heroes of the infant motor industry — the engi-



Wheels of change: Gottlieb Daimler, who was to join the board of Britain's pioneer car company, riding as a passenger in his first car in 1896

neers — got on with putting a British motor car into production. Three names stand out: Simms (consulting engineer), James Critchley (Daimler chief engineer) and Lincolnshire-born Otto Mayer, who had worked with Gottlieb Daimler in Germany since 1887 but returned to England to help set up the Coventry Motor Mills, and stayed for the rest of his long life.

Although the Coventry company had taken the Daimler name, and Gottlieb Daimler was on its board of directors, the German firm had no financial interest in the British organisation: on the contrary, it owed its

continued existence to Simms (who had been born and brought up in Hamburg). Late in 1895 he had mediated between Gottlieb Daimler and the board of the Cannstatt-Daimler company to settle a protracted disagreement which had brought the German company to the edge of bankruptcy: it is probably fair to say that without Simms (and the £17,000 he paid for the transfer of the Daimler licence), the Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft would not have survived to build the first Mercedes in 1901.

Simms and Critchley studied established car factories in France and Britain closely,

and though Simms planned to build cars based on the German Daimler designs in Coventry, Cannstatt was slow to send the requested drawings and patterns.

As a result, when Daimler of Coventry took delivery of a couple of Paris-built Panhard-Levassors in mid-1896, these were taken as the pattern of production: these may have been Daimler-powered, but were thoroughly modern, different in almost every significant respect from the obsolescent, belt-driven horseless carriages still being built by the Germans.

Critchley improved the Panhard design — Coventry's metallurgy was superior to the Parisian variety — and the Daimlers that finally went into production in the spring of 1897 were among Europe's finest cars.

Fortunately for Daimler, Lawson and his cronies moved on to other ventures (which earned Lawson a year's hard labour for fraud in 1904); his other companies soon fell by the wayside. The Daimler Company survived financial crises, and soon confirmed its position as Britain's premiere marque, culminating in 1900 when it delivered the first royal car to

the future Edward VII — as a result of my father introducing him to motoring.

Daimler was acquired by Jaguar in 1960, so is now part of the Ford organisation. Happily, it has produced 200 special centenary Daimlers to celebrate the anniversary and, coincidentally, Ford USA will also be celebrating, as 100 years ago this month Motor Mills tenant Edward Pennington played an indirect role in the creation of Henry Ford's first car, the Quadricycle. Ford based his engine on an article on the Pennington power unit in the *American Machinist* magazine of January 3 1896.

Continued from facing page

time flops: production lasted less than two years. Long-playing stereophonic records appear along with long-distance direct telephone STD (subscriber trunk dialling) calls.

1959 Momentous events: Britain's first motorway, the M1, is opened and the Mini, designed by Alec Issigonis, goes on sale, costing £500 including purchase tax. Also introduced — yellow lines to curb parking, Aston Martin wins at Le Mans, Sir Christopher Cockerell launches another British first, the hovercraft.

1960 Car ownership soars to almost 10 million and will rise by another 5 million in the next decade. Ferrari scores last grand prix victory by a front-engine car. 1961 Jaguar launches the E-type, world's first 150mph production car, and takes over Leyland. Leyland takes over Standard-Triumph and the Morris Minor becomes the first British car to sell 1 million. First Israeli car, the Sabra, is provided by Reliant of Tamworth in Staffordshire. Yuri Gagarin is the first man in space.

1962 Hydrostatic suspension, invented by Alec Moulton, appears for the first time on Austin and Morris 1100 models, which sell more than 2 million. Ford Cortina is launched and Honda makes its first car. Graham Hill wins first of two Formula One world championships. VW makes 1 million Beetles in the year and Lotus races its epochal 25 racing car. Stirling Moss crashes at Goodwood, effectively ending his distinguished career without winning a world championship. James Bond makes his screen debut in *Dr No* and introduces the world to his Aston Martin DB5.

1963 Rover 2000 is launched and Vauxhall opens Ellesmere Port plant on Merseyside to make the Viva. Ford opens rival factory at Halewood. Jim Clark wins the first of two Formula One world championships. Year identifier letter added to registration plates to help trace cars, which have to take an annual MOT test. Vauxhall's first car with the rotary Wankel engine. End of an era: William Morris, later Lord Nuffield, who started

as a bicycle repairer and became a motoring magnate, dies aged 84. A new television programme, *Coronation Street*, tops ratings for the first time. 1964 Chrysler buys into ailing Rootes Group and Porsche launches a car it calls simply the 911. Donald Campbell's Bluebird H reaches 403mph. John Surtees, seven times world motorcycle champion, takes to four wheels to win the Formula One world title. Mary Quant, invents a short skirt, and coins a word that Austin and Morris applies to their little Minor model, the Mini.

1965 First Japanese car — a Daihatsu Compagno — goes on sale in Britain, but Citroën manufacturing in Britain since 1926, closes its factory in Slough, Berkshire. Brake stop lights are compulsory, while Rover races a gas turbine car at Le Mans which finishes tenth.

1966 BMC absorbs Jaguar. First passenger car made in Turkey comes from Reliant, while the Jensen FF is the first four-wheel-drive with anti-lock braking. Leyland takes over Rover. England's soccer team wins the World Cup.

1967 Breathalyser becomes a part of the British way of motoring life. The plastic bag into which motorists blow contains crystals which change colour to indicate whether drivers are over the limit of 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. Penalties are a fine of £100 or a maximum of four months' jail — or both. Year identifier letter moved to August to boost low summer sales, sparking annual one-month sales boom. Iran starts making the Peykan, kits of Hillman Hunters sent from Britain. Donald Campbell's latest record-breaking attempt ends in his death when his jet-powered Bluebird craft crashes on Coniston Water. Cosworth engine — which will become the world's most successful racing engine, appearing in 155 grand prix-winning cars — races for the first time. In Sweden, the nation chaotically switches from driving on the left to the right.

1968 New family car, the Escort, launched



Jackie Stewart, three times champion

by Ford and goes on to be the nation's bestseller for nearly three decades. Leyland and BMC merge to form, not unexpectedly, BLMC. First fuel-injected British car is Triumph 2.5-litre PI, while BLMC makes more than 1 million cars in a year. Twice world motor racing champion, Jim Clark, dies in crash in minor race at Hockenheim circuit in Germany.

1969 Ford launches its Dagenham-built "car you always promised yourself", the long-running Capri. Riley, made since 1898, disappears. Britain sends a record 771,634 cars for export. Jackie Stewart wins first of three world championships. Apollo 11 lands on the moon and Concorde sets out on maiden flight.

1970 New concept in four-wheel-drive vehicles, the Range Rover — designed by Spen King — arrives sensationally and within months, Land Rover cannot make enough to meet demand. Ford makes its 2 millionth Cortina, but Singer, founded in 1905, disappears.

1971 Treadless stick tyres are used in racing, while the Lunar Rover, which cost \$5 million to develop and could travel at 10mph, is first vehicle on the moon. Rolls-Royce, the cars-to-aero group, collapses, and Walter Owen Bentley, founder of the famous marque, dies. The forgettable Morris Marina is launched.

1972 Britain builds record 1.921 million cars. Sales of VW Beetles hit 15 million and General Motors starts offering airbags as safety measure in the US. Clive Sinclair announces the pocket calculator. 1973 Speed limits cut to 50mph to save energy as Britain goes on three-day week during the gravest economic crisis since the war. Yom Kippur war between Israel and Egypt deepens crisis when Arab states cut oil supplies to the West, leading to rising petrol prices and increasing popularity of small cars.

1974 Peugeot takes over Citroën, while Mercedes launches five-cylinder diesel car and BMW first turbo-charged production car. 1975 Graham Hill, twice Formula One world champion, dies in a flying accident. Rolls-Royce Camargue is first car with bi-level air-conditioning (offering different temperatures for head and feet) and the Porsche Turbo is the world's fastest accelerating car. 1976 VW Golf races to 1 million produc-

tion total in 31 months, quickest first million ever. In Britain, Sunbeam and Wolseley names disappear after 77 years. Six-wheeled Tyrrell P34 wins a grand prix while Aston Martin shows dramatic Laguna, featuring electronic digital dashboard. James Hunt wins the world Formula One championship by a single point — and Britain basks in a record-breaking summer forcing the Government to appoint Denis Howell as minister for drought — it starts to rain.

1977-1986

1977 Fiesta launched as Ford takes over as biggest-selling company in UK from British Leyland. Lotus introduces grand prix racing to "ground effect" aerodynamics, Renault the turbo-charger. 1978 Peugeot buys Chrysler's collapsing UK operations for a single dollar. British Leyland decides on partnership with Honda of Japan to make cars jointly, starting with Triumph Acclaim, a rebadged Honda.

1979 Winter of discontent and bleak year of closures in the motor industry.

1980 Production of MGs ends, killed off by British Leyland, which lost £900 on every car exported to the US. Audi Quattro is first volume car with permanent four-wheel-drive. Japanese produce more cars than the US for the first time. 1981 Delorean company launches all stainless steel-bodied car, designed by Lotus, for manufacture in Northern Ireland. BMW introduces on-board computer on 5-series.

1982 Ford introduces "jelly mould" Sierra to replace best-selling Cortina and Mercedes-Benz introduces its first compact car, the 190. Delorean's short life comes to an end when business shuts down, costing 1,500 jobs. Anthony Colin Bruce Chapman, founder of Lotus, dies suddenly.

1983 Last Morris, the Ital, made, ending an era of British motoring, while Richard Noble breaks world land speed record, taking Thrust II to 633mph. Police use car wheelclamp, the dreathed Denver Boot, for first time.

1984 Sir John Egan takes Jaguar Cars, once owned by state-owned BL Group, into private ownership and its most successful era of sales. Last Austin, a Montego, is produced by BL, while the Triumph name also sinks. 1985 Sir William Lyons, genius who founded Jaguar Cars, dies. Rolls-Royce reaches the milestone of 100,000 cars made (75 per cent are still in existence). Clive Sinclair is back with the Sinclair CS electric car. It flops.

1986 Margaret Thatcher opens Nissan factory at Washington, Tyne and Wear, which will make Bluebird saloons and hatchbacks. General Motors buys Lotus, while Sir Graham Day, chairman appointed by Mrs Thatcher, changes name of BL Group to Rover. Rolls-Royce puts anti-lock brakes and fuel injection on all models. Deregulation of the City sparks rise of free-spending yuppies, who make Porsches, Ferraris and GTIs cult objects.

1987-1996

1987 Goodbye to the Ford Capri after 1.8 million made. Ford surprises everybody and buys Aston Martin and tiny AC Cars. 1988 British Aerospace buys Rover for £180 million; the Government writes off £800 million of company debt to get the deal through. Land Rover Discovery launched. Ferrari F40 is the first of the 200mph club, later to be joined by Jaguar's XJ220 and McLaren F1.

1989 Car sales hit record 2.3 million — 500,000 registered in August alone. Britons now own 24 million motor cars. Toyota, Japan's biggest carmaker, decides to set up factory at Burnaston, Derbyshire. Jaguar, jewel in the Government's privatisation crown, cannot go it alone and is bought for £1.6 billion by Ford. Alec Issigonis, born in 1906 and the man who designed both the best-selling British cars of the century — Morris Minor and Mini — dies. Japanese businessman pays £10 million for a Ferrari 250 GTO.

1990 Year starts with Ford's 32,000 workers on national pay strike. Government sells "cherished" number plates — from MUS IC to FI GHT — to make up to £15 million-a-year. Ministers call for action as car crime reaches an epidemic with a theft or break-in every minute. Carmakers rush to invest in Eastern Europe after fall of Berlin Wall. Production of the Citroën 2CV ends with 7 million manufactured. General Motors announces the Impact, an electric car with Dan Dare styling.

1991 First all-new Bentley, the Continental R, since 1952 unveiled by Rolls-Royce, with price of £175,000. Car sales slump to 1.5 million for the year. Gulf War sends petrol prices to record levels.

1992 Nigel Mansell is Formula One world champion at last, winning more grands prix than any other Briton. Honda is latest Japanese company to open a factory in Britain — at Swindon, Wiltshire — to make the Accord mid-range car. Nissan launches Washington-made Micra small car — and MG is back as a sports car, the RV8, a £26,500 MGB lookalike. Rolls-

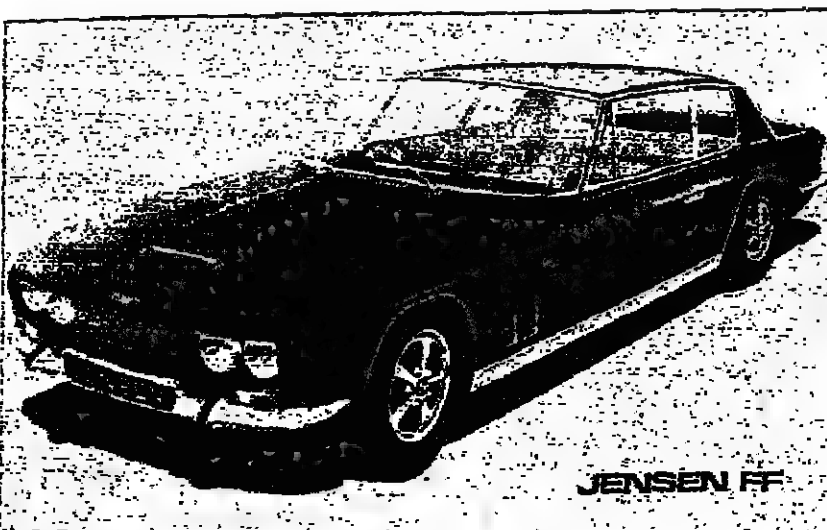
Royce closes Mulliner Park Ward subsidiary after 52 years, home of the Phantom VI limousines used by the Royal Family. Sales of GTI cars, so popular in the Eighties boom, collapse. Brian Angliss releases AC from Ford ownership and launches Ace sports car.

1993 Mansell is IndyCar champion in the US, first driver to win back-to-back titles. General Motors sells Lotus to Bugatti, controlled by controversial Romano Artioli. Sir David Brown dies, but not before he sees his beloved Aston Martin revived by Ford to launch the new DB7, using his initials. Ford launches its world car, the Mondeo. Genevieve, the 1904 Darracq that starred in the Fifties movie, is sold to the Netherlands for £150,000.

1994 Rover is bought from British Aerospace by BMW of Germany for £800 million to form a new group with Bernd Pischetsrieder, a nephew of Sir Alec Issigonis, as chairman. Jaguar launches new XJ range, its first new model in Ford ownership and Ford launches Probe, a successor to the Capri but made in America from Japanese designs. Rolls-Royce announces BMW will make its next generation of engines. Channel Tunnel opens to first cars — a 400-yard procession of veteran and vintage classics led by Prince Michael of Kent in a Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost. McLaren F1 is world's fastest production car at 231mph.

1995 New publication appears — called *Car 95* — in *The Times* to chart fortunes of the motor industry. MG is back, with Rover launching the mid-engined MGF. Flight Lieutenant Andy Green is named as pilot for Thrust SSC, car that will attempt to break sound barrier (747mph). New fashion grips the industry — MPVs, or people carriers. Eleven models are launched. Colin McRae is Britain's first world rally champion. McLaren wins Le Mans at first attempt.

1996 Rover, one of few names that can be traced back to the start of the industry, launches new 200 range across Europe. Britain awaits arrival of the new Bond car, a BMW Z3, made in the US, and the first changes to the driving test in 60 years are made with the introduction of a theory test. Motor industry celebrates 100 years.



The Jensen FF, the first four-wheel-drive car to have anti-lock braking



Nigel Mansell and Frank Williams, star and founder of the racing team

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THE WISCONSIN PARTY, BEING IMPARTIAL IN WISCONSIN COUNTY

Yes, witnesses do telephone the police if they see someone stealing your radio — and they do take it seriously

A myth that died in a car park

Two men in a light blue Corina drive into an open air pay-and-display car park. They get out and approach my car and smash the passenger side front window. A noise like a gunshot alerts a witness in an office overlooking the car park. The men remove the car radio and depart.

So far, so routine. But then things happen that are not in the Handbook of Motorists. The book would have it that anyone seeing such an incident is likely to ignore it, none of my business. Reporting said incident to the police, says the book, is so much wasted time.

We are led to believe that the police response is likely to be: what do you expect us to do? Thus we encourage car crime by assuming that the police won't want to know, which is exactly what the thieves hope we will do. They feed on our impotence.

My radio disappeared at 2.15 in the afternoon. At 2.20 I returned to the car and the man who had seen the thieves took the trouble to come down from his office and tell me

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

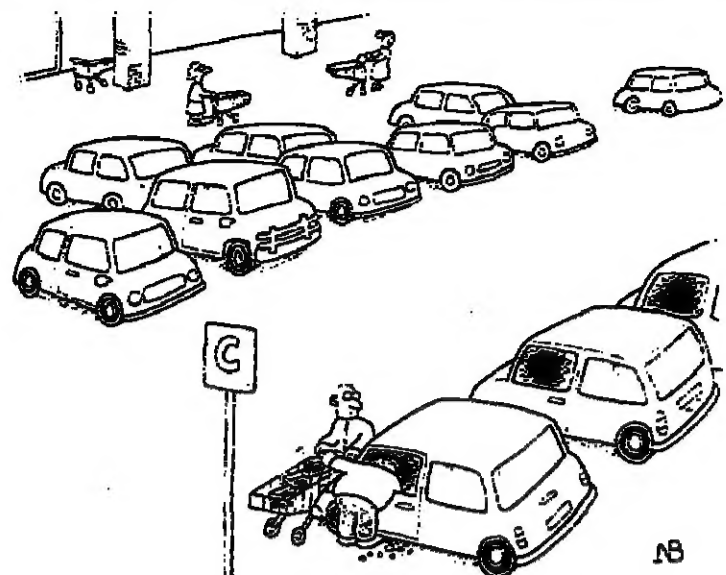


Peter Barnard

what he had seen and that he had called the police.

Within five minutes, a police car arrived. The two officers could not have taken the matter more seriously if it had been a bank robbery. One went off to take a statement from the witness and the other took down my details.

The witness had seen only the registration letter of the car, so the chances of catching the culprits are slim. The point however is that



radios were not famous for following the activities of Mr Atherton and Co. What a miserable life they must lead.

THE IMPRESSION that the MoT is simply a licence to print money will be reinforced by my colleague Vaughan Freeman's report in *Car 96* last week that drivers face bills of hundreds of pounds to replace worn out catalytic converters.

First question: as older cars do not have to have them, why are cars part of the MoT? Next question: if the technology is so rudimentary that a car can be ruined by going through a puddle, why are drivers being lumbered with such delicate devices?

Cats are supposed to be good for 50,000 miles, which is a drive round the block to people who use cars for a living. Now we learn that puddles, driving over road humps too fast or knocking against the end of the exhaust pipe can ruin the catalyst.

All of this is in addition to the age-old cat problem, which is that if you park in long grass you are liable to go up in flames. Parking in long grass tends to be associated with illicit romantic trysts, but burning in hell as a consequence is a little too Biblical for my liking.

The one thing we can be sure of is that nobody who bought a car equipped with a catalyst was told they would shortly be lining the pockets of garage owners as a reward for protecting the ozone layer.

There is still a chance to take part in the journey of a lifetime on the Peking to Paris rally. Kevin Eason reports

An epic from East to West

Great anniversaries need great deeds to celebrate, and intrepid readers of *The Times* are planning an epic. They will be attempting to drive from Peking to Paris next year in a re-run of the world's first motor rally.

Half the 85 entries are pre-Second World War models and include classic car owners such as Chris Dunkley and his wife, Jan, from Maidstone, Kent, who will be pitting their 1935 Bentley against the elements and uncertain roads of a dozen countries.

The Peking to Paris Rally was held for the first time in 1907, when the motor industry was barely born and cars were as primitive as the roads they were expected to traverse. At the end of this first century of cars, the challenge could be just as testing.

Readers of *The Times* jammed the switchboard of the rally organisers, when the event was announced a year ago to book a place on one of the most charismatic and exciting drives of the century.

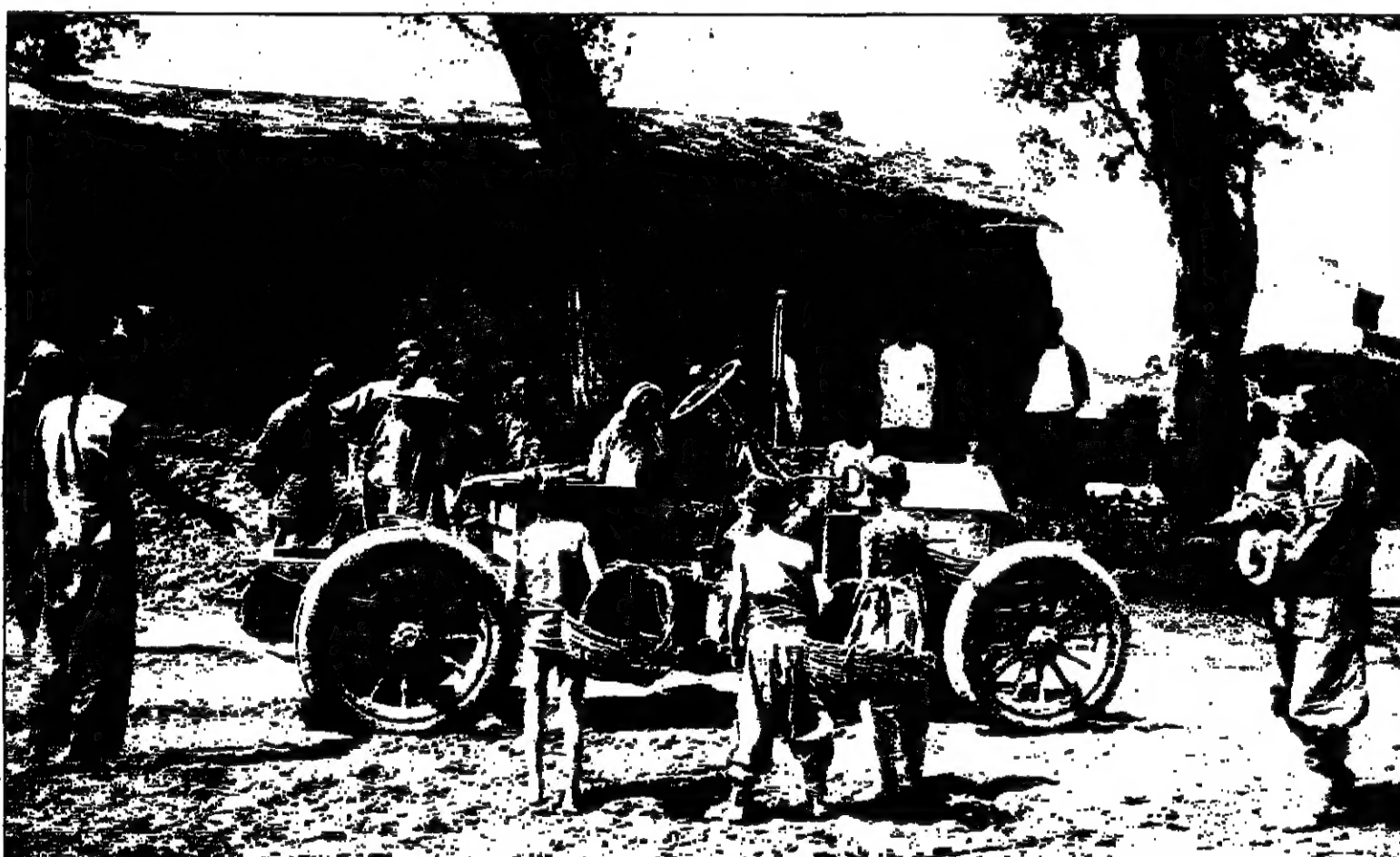
A maximum of 15 places remain for motorists who want to drive the full length of China, climb across the roof of the world of Tibet, and from Khamandu and Nepal, in sight of Everest, race back to Europe via the Taj Mahal, Pakistan, across the Persian trails first trodden by Marco Polo through Iran, Turkey and Greece to the foot of Italy, then across the Alps to Paris.

Some of the conditions have changed little. The route will force drivers to camp in their own tents for at least five nights through remote mountain passes in Tibet, and all of the cars will have to be robust enough to survive at least half the 12,000-mile route on 70-octane petrol.

Apart from the Dunkleys, Lord Selous is turning Bond for the event in an Aston Martin DBS. Lord Montagu of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu is taking the glory car — a 1914 Prince Henry Vauxhall — while Sir David Steel will be in his Rover P5, one of several 3-litre Rovers, a model favoured to do particularly well. London restaurateur Maurice Selci is entering a Citroën 2CV, probably the smallest car, and Peter and Sue Noble, of Loughton, Essex, a 3-ton 1925 Lanchester, probably the biggest.

Also among the adventurers will be the Hon Francesca Sternberg, with the only all-women crew in the event, who has decided to take a Volvo. She says she has never driven in a rally before, but lists her credentials as having held a heavy goods licence and has driven a truck to Bulgaria. The Selection Committee had little difficulty in accepting her entry — but chided her with the comment that her choice of car was "rather boring". That might be unkind to the poor Volvo, but at least she stands a good chance of completing the trip in her trusty Swede.

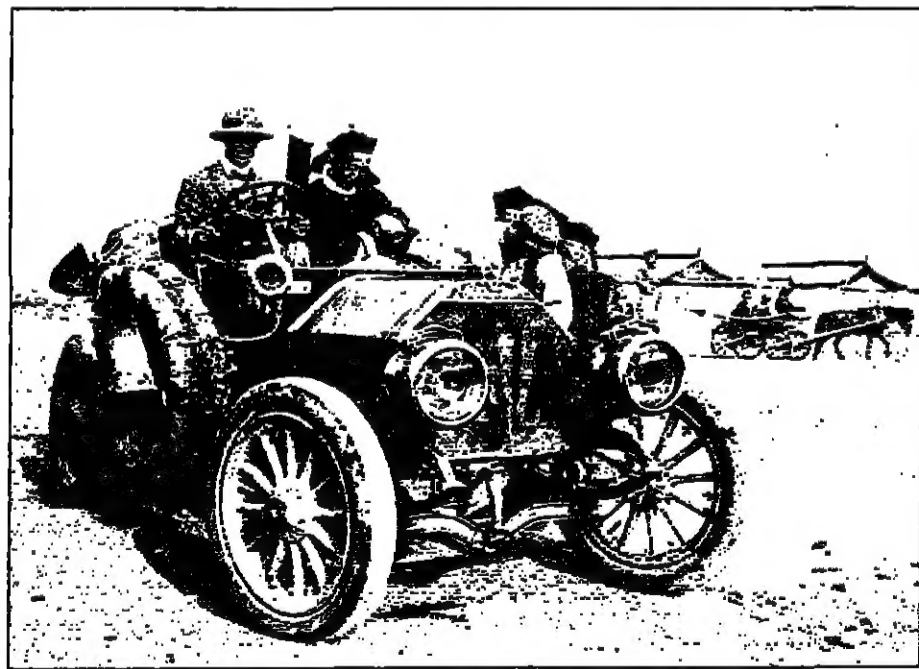
Most popular — and most expensive — is 10 models taking part: Rolls-Royce is second with six, including three Phantoms and a Silver Ghost. Jaguars, Aston Martins and Triumphs will be there along with Humber Snipes, a Vauxhall Cresta and a Peugeot 404. At the start of the 1907 event,



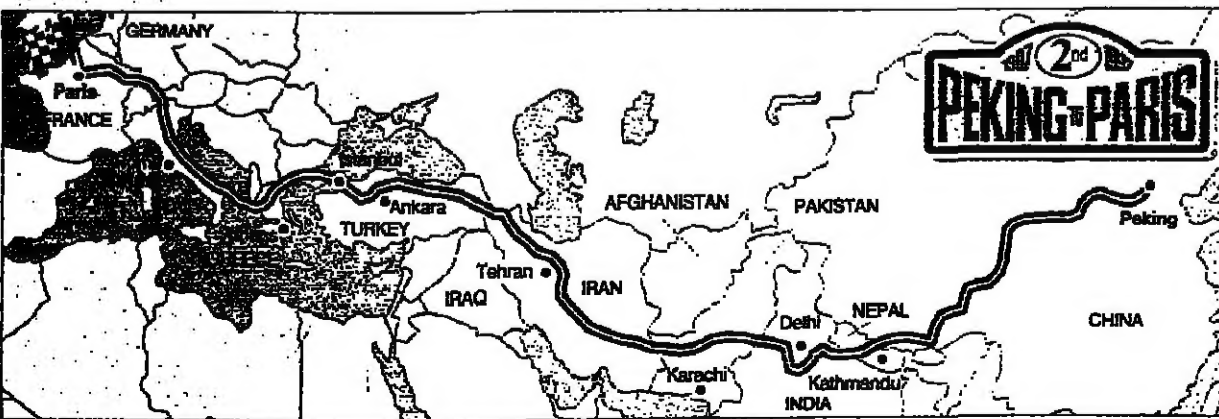
Prince Scipio Borghese's Itala during the 1907 rally; he stopped off to join "many fine ladies" at a ball in St Petersburg and still won by a week



Entrants Chris and Jan Dunkley with their 1935 Bentley



Prince Borghese shows the Grand Lama of Tibet the machine that will move the world



the drivers had no permission to leave China, so arguments and delays at the start meant they set off when the rainy season was well under way. Slime, lots of mud, and the odd paddy field saw a difficult start with the Gobi desert and Mongolia deflating optimistic drivers of five cars who had held enough faith in their abilities to get to the start.

Until 1907, there was only

the London to Brighton run and the odd circuit race, the red flag carried by a man in front of the car at a tame 4mph had only just been abolished in Britain and the motoring establishment considered the Peking escapade so foolhardy that no Brit bothered to enter, reckoning the entire race was doomed from the start.

But once reports made it in Morse code from telegraph

stations along the trans-Siberian railway, eager motorists were captivated by the challenge of it all and daily rang *The Times* eager for news. They needn't have bothered though: in the best Fleet Street traditions, the man from the fledgling *Daily Mail* missed his connection to China, so went instead to a communications relay station where he waited for the daily updates to

come in. He is said to have diverted despatches destined for *The Times* to his own newspaper.

Prince Scipio Borghese won in a 7-litre Itala, although the prize of a bottle of champagne was no more than a token after 60 days' driving. It was not all tough: the Prince, a wealthy and exotic Italian aristocrat, took a diversion at Moscow to drive to St Peters-

burg, taking in a celebratory ball attended by "many fine ladies" then raced the 500 miles back to Moscow to continue with the event to win by a clear week from a Dutch runner-up, a fairground barker in a Spyker who begged and borrowed his way along the route, taking petrol and tyres from other competitors. Only one car failed to make it, a three-wheeler Contal. The crew was rescued, but legend has it that the car is still where they left it, buried beneath the sand of the Gobi desert.

Philip Young, the rally organiser, says that if calls to *The Times* are anything to go by, filling the remaining 15 places will not be much of a headache. He adds: "One thing is certain though, the hangover from the final finish prizegiving in Paris should be truly memorable, with drivers dining out on their experiences long after the dust has settled." Rally headquarters is on 01235-881591.

AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● **LONDON**
International Boat Show, Earls Court January 14, centre, expect heavy traffic in one-way system and on the A4 Cromwell Road.

A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks with contraflow between Hilary Road and the Northern roundabout. A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonion. Major roadworks continue over Lea Valley viaduct.

A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue with various restrictions between the A1 and A1000 junctions. A12 Eastern Avenue, Wansley. Construction of M11 link road continues, with east-bound down to a single lane between the Redbridge roundabout and High Street.

● **SOUTH-EAST**
M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks daily.

M25 Surrey. Two sections of widening work, with lane closures and contraflows between junctions 6 and 8 and junctions 9 and 10.

A36 Hampshire. Repairs at Wellow Common Bridge.

● **SOUTH-WEST**
M4/M5 Avon. Work on the new Second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around Almondsbury & Aust interchanges, and also on the M5 around junction 18.

M32 Avon. Widening work continues on the link between junction 19 of the M4 and Bristol city centre.

M5 Somerset. Bridge repairs with lane closures both ways between junctions 21 and 22.

A4 Willshire. Roadworks and temporary lights in Caine town centre at the Market Hill junction and on Sandy Lane cause regular delays.

A386 Devon. Resurfacing work with temporary lights at Pits Cleave, near Tavistock.

A389 Cornwall. Gas works with temporary lights on Denison Road, Bodmin cause long delays.

● **MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA**
M6 West Midlands. Major roadworks continue between junctions 5 and 6 with lane restrictions in both directions.

M1 Leicestershire. Final stages of the major roadworks underway with lane restrictions in both directions between junctions 21 and 22.

A6 Leicestershire. Major roadworks and contraflow at Lockington, between junction 24 of M1 and Sawley Island.

● **SCOTLAND**
M8 Strathclyde. Roadworks with lane closures in both directions between junctions 26 and 27.

A749 Strathclyde. Dalmar-nock Bridge in Glasgow closed southbound.

A741 Strathclyde. Major repairs to the M8 bridge on Kentfrew Road in Paisley will cause delays.

A945 Grampian. Riverside Drive, Aberdeen closed for demolition work at Wellington Bridge.

A563 Leicestershire. Roadworks and contraflow on Lubbethorpe Way, Leicester between the Dumbell Island and the A47 junction.

A515 Derbyshire. Today and tomorrow, 8am to 4pm, road closed at Aston Bridge near Ashbourne for repairs.

All Norfolk. Construction of the new Wymondham bypass continues, with lane and speed restrictions between Hether-sett and Attleborough.

● **NORTH**
M1 Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at end of motorway, junction 47.

M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 22.

M6 Lancashire. Reduced to two lanes in each direction for work to the overhead gantries between junctions 28 and 30.

From 8pm today until 7am tomorrow both carriageways are completely closed for bridge work between junctions 28 and 29.

M66 Greater Manchester. Roadworks between junctions 4 and 5 with two lanes open each way. From 6am today until 8pm tomorrow north-bound carriageway is closed for additional weekend work.

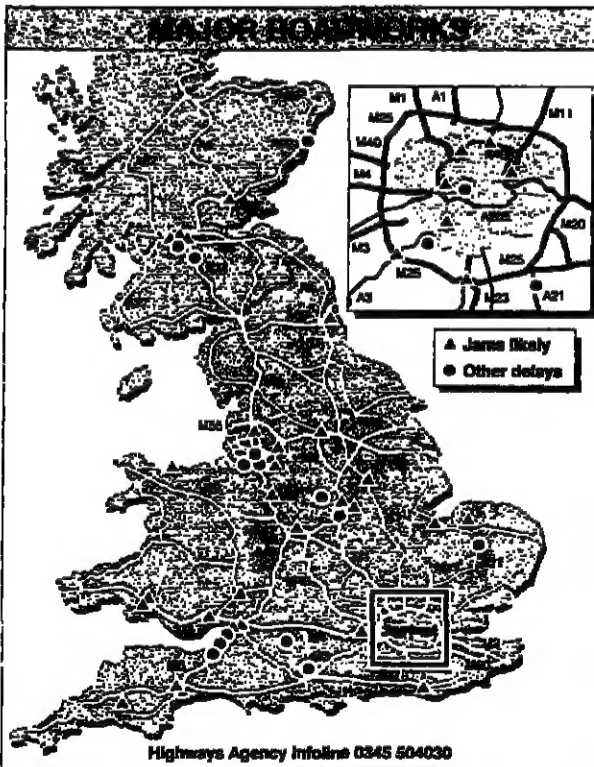
A167M Tyne-side. From January 21 northbound lane closures on the Newcastle Central Motorway near Jesmond Road interchange.

● **WALES**
A449 & A40 Gwent. Major roadworks on Newport to Monmouth route with traffic reduced to a single lane.

A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work on all approaches to the Wychtree roundabout at Morriston.

A483 West Glamorgan. From January 15 major roadworks and contraflow on Fabian Way, Swansea between Elba Crescent and the Earlswood traffic lights.

A550 Clwyd. Construction of a new interchange between Woodbank and Queensferry means lane restrictions and a 40mph limit.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Lead alert

EVIDENCE mounts against new lead-free, four-star petrol finding its way on to British forecourts. Tests of VSRP (valve seat recession protection) petrol in a Rover engine designed for pre-1990 cars led the manufacturer to warn motorists to continue using conventional four-star. The VSRP fuel was designed for environmentally-conscious motorists whose cars needed four-star but who wanted to get rid of lead.

Tracked down

POLICE have cracked an international ring of car thieves thanks to the Tracker homing device. The Tracker, which beams a signal to police cars, was fitted to a left-hand-drive Jeep Grand Cherokee stolen in London. Police followed the signal and found seven vehicles in crates on the docks at Tilbury, awaiting shipment to Nigeria. Other crates contained six other stolen cars — four Mercedes, a BMW and a Vauxhall Frontera.

Racing Magpies

TODAY St James's Park, tomorrow the world ... Kevin Keegan's Newcastle United unveiled this week sponsorship of its own Magpie-coloured sports car. The club is supporting Lister's 200mph Storm GT1, which will compete this year at Daytona as well as the historic Le Mans 24-hour endurance race.

Nissan boost

NISSAN has invested another £10 million in Britain by locating its European data centre at Washington, Tyne and Wear, home of its factory which opened 10 years ago. The centre will control by computer all vehicle production from Washington, which makes the Micra and Primera cars, and Barcelona in Spain, where Nissan makes the Terrano 4x4 (as well as the Ford Maverick), Serena multi-purpose vehicle and Vanette Cargo commercial van.

Honda can move people and luggage better than rival makers, says Alan Copps — and readers have a chance to win one and find out for themselves

In deeper space with a Shuttle

Whether the Honda Shuttle is a people carrier, an estate or an overgrown hatchback has been the subject of a lively debate since it was introduced in this country last June. But get behind the wheel and you soon realise that the answer doesn't really matter.

This versatile vehicle, developed under the project name "personal jet", fulfils all three functions and adds a touch of luxury befitting such an ambitious title. After a New Year test drive including country lanes covered in snow and sheet ice, patchy fog and the cloying mud left by a swift thaw, it also proved itself, on the road at least, a match for many a four-wheel-drive.

Those now tiring of the craze for trendy four-wheel-drive vehicles which rarely, if ever, venture off the roads are among Honda's target market for the Shuttle. Apart from the expensive transmission required to drive four wheels rather than two, the Shuttle offers all the advantages of such vehicles: an elevated driving position, roomy interior and adaptable load space.

The outstanding feature is handling and ride. It offers six very comfortable seats and, especially when they are all in use, a good deal more luggage space than most of its MPV competitors, yet sacrifices nothing of the engineering quality and sporty feel which are Honda's virtues. In a rapidly growing market which carmakers are falling over themselves to get into and where various contenders have been described as "vans

with windows" or "barged up minibuses", the Shuttle looks like a car, feels like a car and drives exactly like a car.

The smooth ride and precise handling is delivered through the same all-round independent suspension layout used in Honda's cars. It provides the feel of a car-like driving position and the comfort of a saloon, but combines them with that "view over the other traffic" that proves so appealing to many car drivers when they sit in a people carrier.

The downside of that high driving position — and one of those features that puts a lot of first-timers off these vehicles — is that if you throw most people carriers at a tight corner you can induce an alarming amount of roll. It may be perfectly safe and all four wheels may remain firmly in contact with the surface, but because of their height the sensation of rolling is accentuated enough to frighten a nervous novice. The Shuttle is a good deal lower than most of its rivals and, with its independent suspension and anti-roll bars, feels much more secure. On a tight bend, even on a grotty surface, it responds like a saloon. On icy and twisting lanes the Shuttle never provided a moment of alarm.

Ride and handling are complemented by all-round disc brakes and an anti-lock braking system as standard. A lot has been written recently about how ABS may give drivers a false sense of security and thus encourage them to take unnecessary risks, but in the conditions found in middle England over the New Year there was absolutely no doubt-



The Honda Shuttle offers a feeling of perfect driving safety in the worst road conditions and enough room to accommodate all the family and everything they want to take with them

ing its worth. The emphasis on safety inside the car is also strong with twin front airbags, safety-cage construction for the main passenger cabin, side impact protection, a heavily reinforced latch for the rear tailgate and three-point seat belts throughout.

The four front seats are all "captain's chairs" finished in luxury fabric and with fold-down central arm rests. There is generous adjustment and spacing between them and the whole cabin is designed as a

walk-through area, thanks to the column-mounted gear-shift lever and handbrake set close to the driver's seat.

All this is pulled along with extraordinary smoothness by a 2.2-litre, four-cylinder engine mounted transversely on a strengthened and adapted version of the front substructure from Honda's Accord saloon. This engine is a refinement of that used in the Accord for the US market. Its tuning is aimed more at delivering fuel economy and consistent torque than

at out-and-out performance, although Honda is fiercely proud of its racing pedigree and, even in this economical form, the Shuttle boasts a higher top speed (114mph) and faster acceleration to 60mph (12.2 seconds) than any but the most souped-up rivals.

The Shuttle comes only with automatic transmission, a decision taken after market research concluded that a majority of customers seeking an upmarket people carrier would prefer it. It is the latest four-speed version of Honda's electronically controlled unit which includes a feature known as "Grade Logic". This prevents that irritating feeling of "hunting" between the ratios, which often happens with conventional automatics on a gradient. It works through sensors that detect the severity of the gradient and whether the car is going uphill or downhill, then relies on this



ENTER OUR PRIZE DRAW TO WIN A CAR WORTH £23,400



Win a Honda Shuttle

You can be the proud owner of a fabulous new Honda Shuttle, the ultimate people carrier, thanks to an exclusive competition in *The Times*. The car, which takes six passengers and is a breeze to drive, is worth more than £23,400.

All you have to do is collect three tokens from *The Times* next week and send them to the address on the coupon below to be entered into a free prize draw.

It goes without saying the Honda is a superb piece of motoring machinery with safety, durability, and reliability as standard. But it also has luxurious extras that make driving it a relaxing and rewarding experience.

The Shuttle is this year's most covetable car. It has power steering that is speed sensitive for easier parking and crisper cornering, the driver's raised position, it has all-round visibility, the dashboard with the feel of an executive car and controls and instruments which are clear and easy to use.



BUILT WITHOUT COMPROMISE

It is remarkably adaptable so whether you are a parent who has to pile in all the family and their paraphernalia or have the sort of hobby which requires you to carry around a lot of equipment, this car will easily fulfil all your requirements. Plus, its overall height is little more than that of an estate car so you can reach the roof comfortably.

There is a two year unlimited mileage warranty, a six year anti corrosion warranty and, as a Honda owner, the winner will enjoy unparalleled after sales service.

If you miss *The Times* one day next week, you can request one token by writing to: Honda Token Request, PO Box 490, London E1 9DW before Tuesday, January 23.

For further details on the new Shuttle and your nearest Honda dealer call: 0345 159 159

THE SHUTTLE

Body style: 5-door, 6-seater, people carrier.

Engine: Transversely mounted, 4-cylinder, 2150cc giving 150bhp at 5600 rpm.

Transmission: 4-speed automatic with electronic control is standard.

Performance: Maximum speed 114mph, 0-60mph in 12.2 seconds.

Economy: Urban cycle 22.6 mpg; constant 56mph, 35.8mpg; constant 75mph, 29.4mpg.

Equipment: Power assisted steering, anti-lock braking, twin airbags, central locking with built-in immobiliser, six-speaker stereo radio/cassette player, air conditioning, electric slide/tilt sunroof, electric mirrors and windows.

Insurance Group: 16.

Price: £22,995 plus £450 delivery charge.

information to select the optimum gear to avoid unnecessary changes.

As well as taking care of hills, this also makes town driving a relaxed affair, a vital point when you consider how many people carriers are bought with the school run in mind. Fortunately, all this gadgetry does nothing to reduce the responsiveness of the transmission if you need to floor the throttle to get round one of those dreadful "middle-lane hogs" who must be the curse of our motorways.

At £22,995, the Shuttle costs more than the average people carrier, but the conclusion of a week's test in grim winter conditions must be that, especially in terms of comfort, ride and handling, it offers a lot more, too.

Whatever Honda may say about having invented a new class of vehicle, the Shuttle currently has to compete in the people carrier market, where there are now ten makers fighting over the territory which Renault pioneered a decade ago with the Espace. Many of the models on offer have seven seats rather than the Honda's six, so to load it with a family of five and their luggage seemed a fair test.

A New Year break in icy Oxfordshire provided an ideal opportunity. One of the major criticisms of people carriers is that, despite all the blurb about versatility and load carrying, if you want to use all the seats you are not left with much luggage room and, even if you take one seat out of a seven-seater, there is not sufficient space for six sets of luggage. We needed five seats, so would removing one from the Shuttle's middle row leave enough space for the piles and piles we wanted to transport?

Usually, we do not travel with the kitchen sink — it just seems like it — but on this occasion we did want to take a cumbersome electric radiator, being uncertain whether in sub-zero temperatures the heating in our holiday home would meet the demands of a two-year-old daughter who seemed to have picked up every bug going this winter.

We also wanted to carry a toboggan to keep two older children amused, piles of extra bedding (not needed in the end, but very reassuring to pack in the shivering cold), suitcases bursting with anoraks, sweaters and thermals, bags of wellies for all those healthy country walks, several boxes and bags of Christmas leftovers, a few late gifts... and a high chair and a baby buggy and a load of toys to keep the little one amused and, of course, a number of bulky presents from which the older children could not bear to be parted so soon after Christmas.

The first pleasant surprise was the ease with which one of the middle seats was removed, a simple matter of releasing a couple of clips at the rear and then pushing it forward. (I'd tried to remove a seat from one of the Shuttle's rivals a few weeks before and given up — with a couple of broken fingernails — after several minutes of struggle.)

The seat was a bulky but not heavy load to lug back into the house, but, because of the generous space between the two middle seats and the legroom in the rear,



Sitting pretty: shuttle the seats to suit your situation

the floor area opened up in this way was impressive and because of the wide-opening rear door filling it up was no problem.

One of the much-publicised advantages of the Shuttle is the ease with which the rear bench seat folds into a almost flat space for large loads. But one of its less-publicised virtues is that, with the rear seat upright, that large floor well (a space taken up by the spare wheel in many vehicles) is available for luggage.

In went the radiator and the high chair and the buggy and several bags and a suitcase and the toys... for a moment I wondered whether I'd wasted my time removing the middle seat. But the bags and boxes and cases kept pouring out of the house. So in the space vacated by the middle seat

we stacked the biggest suitcase, the boxes of food, the toboggan, the extra bedding and all those irritating "useful" bits and bobs that we had left off the first list or discovered in some cranny as we packed.

Then we all climbed in and settled down for a journey in appalling weather conditions. Despite the lack of space to spread out the little one sat snugly in her child seat in the rear while her big sister sprawled across the rest of the bench and fell fast asleep.

Her nine-year-old brother was the only one who stayed awake throughout the trip, sitting in the remaining middle seat issuing a series of orders in unintelligible *Star Trek* language as we headed up the M40 through the snow. After all, he explained, it was a "captain's seat" and we were in a space Shuttle.

HONDA SHUTTLE PRIZE DRAW ENTRY FORM

I enclose three tokens from *The Times* and wish to enter the draw. Post to: The Times/Honda Shuttle Prize Draw, 134-146 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3AR.

Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms First name PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Surname

Address

Postcode Day Tel (inc STD code)

Current main car: Make Model

Reg letter Expected replacement date for your car

Is the car owned either? ☐ Privately ☐ Company

I would like more information on the new Shuttle ☐ Yes

I would like to test drive the new Shuttle ☐ Yes

Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (Please tick box)

☐ 1) 15-24 ☐ 2) 25-34 ☐ 3) 35-44 ☐ 4) 45-54 ☐ 5) 55-64 ☐ 6) 65+

Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (4-6 copies) during the week?

Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy occasionally (3 copies or less) during the week?

Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (2-4 copies a month)?

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